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ABSTRACT

The 17 articles in this collection outline the state of linguists' present knowledge about English and suggest ways of dealing with language in the English classroom. Topics include an historical investigation of language attitudes and the implications for bidialectalism in the schools; professional viewpoints on the Back to the Basics movement as it relates to spelling, grammar and usage, and language and dialect; the use of a wide variety of media in English language study; the way in which a supplementary writing laboratory was structured; ways of teaching listening skills; and inductive approach to the rules of speaking; a survey of students' attitudes toward spelling; the employment of concepts of Action-Learning in the classroom; a method for teaching concepts of Action-Learning in the classroom; and a method for teaching exposition through the use of sector analysis. (GW)

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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: ISSUES IN STUDY AND TEACHING

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ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 1977 - - - - - THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: ISSUES IN STUDY AND TEACHING

CONTENTS

What Teachers Believe: An Historical Investigation of Language Attitudes and the Implications for Bidialectalism in the Schools 1
Harvey A. Daniels, Rae A. Moses, and Robert A. Gundlach
Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois

Back to the Basics: Spelling 7
Elizabeth McPherson (for the SLATE Steering Committee)

Recent Trends in Linguistics: Is Linguistics Finally Becoming Meaningful? 9
Don L. F. Nilsen, Arizona State University

Rooting Out 15
James H. Chadbourn, Watsonville High School, Watsonville, California

Teaching the English Language: How Can Media Help? 16
John H. Bushman, University of Kansas

Orwell's Incomplete Rhetoric: "Politics and the English Language" 21
William T. Ross, University of South Florida

Teaching the Basics of Language: Structuring the Supplementary Writing Lab 26
Muriel Harris, Purdue University

The Sheer Edge of Meaning: Teaching Composition to Native Americans 30
Stephen K. Tollefson, University of California, Berkeley

Language: The Listening Imperative 38
Marie Wittek, York College, CUNY

An Inductive Approach to the Rules of Speaking 42
Sandra McKay, San Francisco State University

A Holistic Approach to Communications 46
Dennis E. Schneider and Randall W. Ackley, Navajo Community College, Tsaile, Arizona

Attitudes Towards Spelling 50
James W. Ney, Arizona State University

Whither English? 56
Frank Schnorbus, Bordentown, New Jersey

Back to the Basics: Grammar and Usage 58
Charles Suhor (for the SLATE Steering Committee)

Action-Learning: A Way of Planning 60
Denny T. Wolfe, Jr., Raleigh, North Carolina

Teaching Exposition with Sector Analysis 63
Hortense A. Sarot, Hunter College, CUNY

Back to the Basics: Language and Dialect 68
Elizabeth McPherson (for the SLATE Steering Committee)

PREFACE TO THE FEBRUARY 1977 ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN

As Elizabeth McPherson says in the SLATE Newsletter reprinted in this issue of the AEB, "People complain that the schools aren't teaching students to 'talk correctly,' and people are confused about what 'correct talk' is." Part of the confusion evolves from English teachers' own disagreement about the nature of language, and especially, about the nature of the English language. Our linguistic knowledge has exploded in the last twenty years; new descriptions and dicta about language and its use fill the scholarly journals. Meanwhile, teachers on the front lines are faced with questions about what to do with all this data. For instance:

> Is English best described by transformational grammar, or by structural grammar, or by some less familiar system, such as the sector analysis introduced in this issue by Professor Sarot? And what about our students' parents, who believe that English is best described by traditional grammar? What do we tell them about what we are teaching?
>
> What about dialects of English? Because of the powerful social sanctions which surround the use or non-use of "standard English," and, on the other hand, because of the profession's stance on students' right to their own language, teachers are often forced to walk a tightrope between community demands for "correct talk" and their professional commitment to preserve their students' linguistic heritage. This question is of special concern to English teachers in Arizona, where 80% of the students entering the public schools speak a language other than English.
>
> What do we do about the mechanics of writing in English? The grammar of English is not easy to master, especially for students who neither read nor write with fluency or enthusiasm. Moreover, the English orthographical system is complex, to say the least, requiring as much memorization of exceptions as learning of rules. Is editing our students' prose part of our professional duty?
>
> What about usage? Should we permit our students to write "It's me," or to begin sentences in their papers with "Hopefully," since they, and most everyone they know, use those constructions in speaking?

The February issue of AEB addresses some of these questions. It contains articles which outline the state of our current knowledge about the language you are now decoding; offers some suggestions for teaching English not only to its native speakers, but to those who speak it as a second language or dialect; and outlines some strategies for dealing with those members of the community who believe that "teaching the basics" involves students in diagramming sentences and underlining the subject once and the predicate twice. Please enjoy.

WHAT TEACHERS BELIEVE: AN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BIDIALECTALISM IN THE SCHOOLS

Harvey A. Daniels,
Rae A. Moses,
and Robert A. Gundlach
Rosary College, River Forest, Illinios

It has been about a decade since linguists became actively involved in the development of school policies concerning nonstandard language. A part of the difficult readjustments of the middle sixties was a realization that social dialects demanded scholarly, educational, and governmental attention. Quickly, the influence of linguistics began to be felt across the curriculum, and especially in the planning of bilingual and bidialectal language programs.

This involvement was not always welcomed. In a 1968 article entitled New Linguists Menace Nation's Schools, Lawrence Hall of Bowdoin College warned that "the self-styled new linguists are trying to take over the teaching of English with an elaborately fabricated, well-financed, and highly publicized crusade that has overwhelmed opponents and threatens to inflict on the nation's schools "a modern jabberwocky on the grand scale." "With Madison Avenue cunning," Hall warned, linguists seek to inflict on the unsuspecting schools "a kind of space-age macro-nonsense" and an "erudite form of illiteracy."[1] If Time magazine's 1975 essay on language is to be believed, Hall's worst fears have now been realized. The American language, "says students often seem disastorously ignorant of words; they stare uncomprehending, at simple declarative English."[2]

More about the current "crisis" later. For now it is enough to note that it has been a turbulent ten years for everyone involved in school language programs, and that the task of developing sound language policies is far from over. In this paper, we want to take up one particularly important aspect of the problems, and that is the continuing debate over bi-dialectalism and the issues surrounding it. Specifically, we want to focus on teachers' language attitudes as they affect the chances for successful implementation of bidialectal language programs in the schools. While the central role of teachers' language attitudes has always been at least acknowledged in this connection, we feel that a look at the deeper historical and wider cultural context of these attitudes will be useful.

It was largely at the urging of linguists that teachers were asked in the mid-1960's to take a new approach to language in their classrooms. Forget the tradition of eradication, teachers were told, and try to adopt an accepting, supportive attitude towards whatever language your students may bring with them to school. Only in this way will you be able to nurture the trust which will be needed when you later attempt to add standard English to your student's speech repertoire. A typical version of this demand on teachers was outlined by Karen Hess:

> The sensitivities of minority groups demand a new and humane basis for the teacher's actions in teaching a Standard English -- namely the understanding that a Standard English is taught not because it is "correct," but because it is a socially, educationally and vocationally useful dialect. This requirement suggests a reorientation of teachers from an absolutist to a relativistic attitude toward language -- an orientation which may be contrary to the current value systems of many teachers.[3]

Hess emphasizes a proposition which has been central to virtually all bidialectal programs;

namely, that teachers must maintain a relativistic attitude towards nonstandard language in order for such a program to succeed. The language attitudes of the teachers, in fact, can be seen as the major difference between eradication and bidialectalism: in eradication, the teacher is seeking to replace an unacceptable form of speech with the approved one; in bidialectalism, the teacher accepts the student's natural dialect and leaves it intact while adding to it another dialect deemed useful in some--but not all--situations. As Hess points out, however, relativistic language attitudes of the kind required in bidialectal programs probably run counter to the absolute belief systems of many teachers.

This tension between absolute and relative views of language, though, did not appear in its first incarnation during the 1960's. The history of English teaching in America shows that this debate has, in various forms, plagued teachers throughout this century. In the face of a strong absolutist tradition, a few scholars began round 1900 to advance notions about language which were relativistic for their age. Thomas Lounsbury of Yale University asserted in 1903 that:

> ...there is no such thing as a language becoming corrupt...The words which constitute it have no real significance of their own. It is the meaning which men put into them that gives them all the efficacy they posses...Never was there a more ridiculous reversal of the actual order of events than that contained in (the) assertion that "no nation hath long survived the decrepitude of its language."[4]

Lounsbury's ideas notwithstanding, the major concern of English teachers of the age was precisely with corruption and its impact on the health of the nation. The National Council of Teachers of English, which was first organized during this period, devised the following pledge to be recited by students during Better Speech Week in 1918.

> I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag.
> I love my country's language. I promise:
> 1. That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.
> 2. That I will say a good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "un-hum" and "nup-un" or a foreign "ya" or "yep" and "nope".
> 3. That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud rough tones, by enunciating distinctly, and by speaking pleasantly, clearly, and sincerely.[5]

A number of voices were quickly raised against the pledge and its absolutist mentality. In 1920, W. P. Reeves wrote in the English Journal that American dialects and idioms were not only natural and healthy, but a positive expression of the diversity of American life as well.[6] Enough similar objections were raised in the early twenties that the NCTE was obliged to abandon its support of both Better Speech Week and the pledge by the end of the decade. In an attempt to settle the absolutist-relativist controversy, the NCTE sponsored several research monographs on usage, beginning in 1927. These studies, conducted first by Sterling Leonard and later by Marckwardt and Walcott, all tended to show that English teachers were trying to preserve in the classroom niceties of language long since abandoned by even the most educated speakers in the language community. By 1935, these findings prompted an NCTE commission to declare:

> Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to the speaker and listener. It is the product of custome, neither cramped by rulw nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language.[7]

By this time, however, a serious problem was becoming apparent. In spite of the increasingly consistent efforts of the profession's leadership to promote relativistic

attitudes towards language, the absolutist tradition rolled along untouched in most classrooms. Albert Marckwardt took several pages of English Journal in 1935 to complain of the teachers' indifference to the research on usage.[8]

Seventeen years later, in 1952, the leaders of the NCTE were still expressing disappointment in the response of classroom teachers. In an English Journal article, Robert Pooley declared:

> No story is more exciting than the successful battle of the National Council of Teachers of English to liberalize the teaching of English usage...But (the) facts, all available in print, many of them for a decade or more, are not generally known by teachers of English...We have secured, at length, a partial acceptance of the truths about language which every linguist takes for granted. But the battle is not yet won.[9]

Pooley's exhortation was gentle, but its underlying message was clear enough. Teachers' attitudes towards language weren't becoming more relativistic fast enough to please the increasingly frustrated leaders of their profession.

The debate was focused but hardly resolved in subsequent years. In 1956, another NCTE commission presented a more schematic version of the relativist line:

1) language changes constantly;
2) change is normal and represents not corruption but improvement;
3) spoken language is the language;
4) correctness rests on usage;
5) all usage is relative.[10]

By this time, the leaders of the Council had been arguing persistently for a relativistic view of language for over 30 years, and yet the classroom practices of most teachers seemed largely unaffected. Around this time, a new development deflected the controversy, and debates over usage matters subsided dramatically by the early sixties. That development was, of course, the relatively sudden entry of "culturally different" students into the consciousness, if not immediately the classrooms, of American teachers. Quickly the major language issue for educators became nonstandard dialects rather than usage. What is most important to note, however, is that the dialect issue did not so much replace as subsume the usage controversy.

While many of the earliest responses to the problem of non-standard dialects drew heavily on the absolutist tradition, and accordingly prescribed the eradication of these dialects, linguists and some educators moved quickly to a consensus that bidialectalism was the appropriate approach. Bidialectal language programs however, as Karen Hess pointed out, inevitably require that teachers develop relativistic attitudes towards language. Thus, the sudden need for teachers to deal with speakers of nonstandard dialects seems to have both extended and intensified the pressure on teachers to change their attitudes: a demand which has been placed on them in various forms for the past 50 years. Hess's caution in 1973 that relativistic language attitudes may be contrary to the current value systems of many teachers brings us up to the present. In spite of the long debate among American English teachers, during which relativist forces generally controlled the professional organizations, it is generally acknowledged that an absolutist view of language continues to reign in the classroom. The durability of this absolutist tradition has been a frustrating mystery to those who have attempted to break it. Most of the theories which have been advanced to explain this phenomenon center around some kind of strong oral tradition of absolutist values passed along from one generation of teachers to another.[11] However, there is certainly a question whether a tradition strictly internal to the profession can adequately explain the longevity and intensity of the absolutist attitudes we have been considering.

So far, we have been speculating about the sources of teachers' language attitudes: we have looked at scholars, professional leaders, and linguists as possible sources of these beliefs. Again, we must ask why it is that the absolutist attitude of school teachers are so difficult to penetrate and change. It we look as language from the teacher's point of view, what will we see? The quote from Time magazine at the beginning of this paper--the one about the decline of American English--may do more to improve our understanding of teachers attitudes than any study of the professional history can.

The appeals to teachers which we have cited--first to liberalize their notions of usage, and now to adopt the relativistic attitudes necessary for bidialectal programs--have always assumed that teachers' professional attitudes towards language were the ones which required alteration. In other words, we have assumed that teachers will respond to a professional appeal about language, and that their personal attitudes would be brough into line with the appropriate professional response. The fact that teachers have generally not adjusted their professional attitudes or their classroom practice certainly suggest that something must be getting in the way--and this might well be conflict with their personal beliefs about language, beliefs which spring more from the general than tje teaching culture. It may be commonly held beliefs (and misconceptions) about language which plague the general populace- a group of which they are very much a part.

One need not look far to discover abounding support for absolutist notions of language in the general culture. We are currently, in fact, in the middle of a period of near-hysteria concerning the immenent collapse of our language. The decline in SAT scores which was announced last Fall elicited an outpouring if concern from newspapers, magazines, and television simply could no longer speak English. TV Guide, put on the defensive by much theorizing that television was to blame for the communicative handicaps of American youth, offered tough editorial which laid the responsibility on lame-brained liberal educators, who have given us:

> youngsters running off to live in drug-soaked communes, to engage in mindless sexual promiscuity, to produce a crop of illegitimate children, and to send VD rates soaring. And, presto-magico, all about is we saw a nation of Johnnies who could no longer speak English--I mean, like, wow! y'know, man, like, y'know, heavy,! No vocabulary at all![12]

Time magazine's essay, entitled Can't Anyone Here Speak English, offered Professor J. Mitchell Morse of Temple University the opportunity to reveal that what some people call Black English is, in fact, "the shuffling speech of slavery."[13]

Time also quoted and liberally praised Edwin Newman, the NBC newsman whose cormudgeonly book, Strictly Speaking (subtitled, Will America Be the Death of English?), spent 26 weeks on the top of 1975 bestseller lists. Newman makes no bones about the crisis: "Language is in decline," he asserted because there has been a "wholesale breakdown" in the enforcement of language rules.[14] The kind of rule which Newman would like to see enforced, for example, is the one against sprinkling conversations with the "empty" phrase, "y'know." Newman's Theory about the origins of the "y'know crises" is not without interest. It began, Newman explains,

> among poor blacks who, because of various disabilities imposed on them, often did not speak well and for whom k'know was a request for assurance that they had been understood. From that sad beginning it spread among people who wanted to show themselves sympathetic to blacks, and among those who saw it as the latest thing and either could not resist or did not want to be left out.[15]

In December, 1975, Newsweek ran a cover story entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write," which summarized much of the current language and literacy crisis. In the article "structural linguists" were identified as "major villains" in the supposed collapse of American childrens' language skills.[16]

The feeling that we are today living through a linguistic crisis unique in human history has, of course, been with us for centuries. Jonathan Swift wrote in 1710 that a sudden and disastrous turnabout had occurred in the English language, and warned that unless immediate measures were taken to stem the tide of corruption the language would be hopelessly degenerated in twenty years.[17] In the nineteenth century, this cry was taken up, particularly by Walter Savage Landor, who announced that the English language, between 1775 and 1825, had become more rapidly and thoroughly corrupt than any tongue ever spoken by man.[18] Later in the nineteenth century, it was widely argued that a dangerous, illiterate, and mindless new mass medium was about to deliver the coup de grace to the English language. This was, of course, the newspaper, and blame was heaped upon them in much the same way that we currently abuse television.[19] Around the turn of the century another palpable crisis arrived. The president of the Modern Language Association bemoaned to his colleagues "the deplorable lack of skill in the use of speech so apparent among us,"[20] and Princeton University felt itself obliged to set up a clinic for its undergraduates diagnosed as illiterate.[21] The letters columns of the Nation and Harpers were liberally sprinkled with doomsayers. One writer drew the issue especially clearly in a 1906 letter: "we stand powerless or struggle hopelessly against the tidal wave of coarse, slovenly, low-bred language, which is swallowing up our children in its flood. Must we see the dear English of former days swept under to destruction?"[22]

Today, as always, the popular culture abounds with warnings that a linguistic apocalypse is near. What effect can these dire predictions have on teachers--people who not only feel intimately involved with the life of the language, but also are held accountable by the popular press for much of any purported decline? We would like to assume that the teachers' allegiance is to the cooler, and more relativistic view of their professional leadership. But what about the impact of the powerful, omnipresent, and linguistically absolutist popular press? As things currently stand, we have no good way of determining what forces have the greatest influence on the thinking and attitude-formation of school teachers.

The fact remains that the language programs we need, especially for speakers of non-standard dialects, require relativistic language attitudes on the part of teachers. By this we simply mean that teachers must be able to accept their students as they come to school, in their language as in every other aspect of their cultural inheritance. Teachers need to see that while language varieties may have differing social weight, they do not exist in moral or intellectual hierarchies. The historical evidence, some of which we have touched on today, suggests three main things:

First, that linguists and some educators have recognized for decades the crucial need for relativistic language attitudes among teachers.

Second, that these attitudes have generally not been present among the vast majority of schoolteachers,

and Third, that persistent attempts to develop relativistic attitudes through the ordinary professional channel have not been successful. This longstanding bottleneck suggests to us that the work of linguists in helping school people to develop good language programs is far from over. In order to move beyond the current state of affairs, we will need better research: more information about the sources, operation, impact, and especially ways of changing the language attitudes and related practices of teachers in the classroom. Linguists have already made important contributions to education over the past decade. If we can now move, through research, towards making our ideas more accessible, and more persuasive to teachers, we will enormously enlarge that contribution.

1 Lawrence S. Hall, " 'New Linguists' Menace Nation's Schools", School and Society, March 2, 1968, p. 125.

2 "Can't Anyone Here Speak English?" Time, August 25, 1975, p. 34.

3 Karen Hess, "Dialects and Dialect Learning: Where We're At", English Education, October-November, 1973, p. 27.

4 Thomas R. Lounsbury, "Is English Becoming Corrupt?" (Second Paper), Harper's Monthly, January 1903, p. 194.

5 Much of the historical material used in this section of the paper is drawn from "An Examination of the Attitudes of the NCTE Toward Language", Raven I. McDavid (ed.) National Council of Teachers of English Research Report No. 4, Champaign, Illinois, 1965.

6 W. P. Reeves, "Our Pragmatic Language", cited by Betty Gawthorp, "1911-1929", in Raven I. McDavid (ed.), op. cit., pp. 11-12.

7 W. W. Hatfield, "An Experience Curriculum in English", cited by C. Michael Lightner, "1930-1945", in Raven I. McDavid (ed.) op. cit., p. 23.

8 Albert H. Marckwardt, "The High School Teacher and a Standard of Usage", in Lightner, op. cit. p. 22.

9 Robert C. Pooley, "Publicizing Our Aims", quoted in Doris C. Meyers, "1945-1954", in Raven I. McDavid (ed.) op. cit. p. 46.

10 "English Language Arts in the Secondary School", Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, cited by Geraldine Russell in "1955-1963" in Raven I. McDavid (ed.) op. cit. p. 49.

11 See, for example, Mary Vaiana Taylor, "The Folklore of Usage", College English, April 1974, pp. 756-768.

12 Edith Efron, "The 'New' Illiteracy: Blaming It on TV Skirts Real Issues", TV Guide, October 11-17, 1975, p. A-6.

13 Time, op. cit., p. 36.

14 Edwin Newman, Strictly Speaking: Will America Be the Death of English? (Indianapolis and New:; Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), pp. 17, 24.

15 Ibid, p. 28.

16 "Why Johnny Can't Write, Newsweek, December 8, 1975, p. 60.

17 Thomas R. Lounsbury, "Is English Becoming Corrupt? (First Paper) Harpers Monthly, December 1902, p. 108.

18 Ibid, p. 112

19 Lounsbury (Second Paper), p. 193

20 "Special Correspondence: Central Division of the Modern Language Association", The Nation, January 11, 1906, p. 39.

21 "Good English", The Nation, June 27, 1934, p. 720.

22 Sarah Willard Hiestand,"Slovenly Speaking of English". The Nation, January 25, 1906. pp. 72, 73.

BACK TO THE BASICS: SPELLING
Elizabeth McPherson (for SLATE)

The Issues

If the pbulic agrees on one "basic" problem, it's probably spelling. Wherever the discussion starts, whether it deals with dialect or usage or writing, fairly soon somebody is bound to say, "But, what about spelling?"

It's hard to be sure about clarity or coherence or creativity, but a misspelled word is easy to spot, and easy to check, it there's a reliable dictionary around. People can argue about commas, and disagree about whether a colon or a dash is more effective, but we are as one in agreeing that we write a letter, right an injustice, or observe a funeral rite. People are saying that many students can't spell very well, or that some students can't spell some words, and that the schools should do something about it.

Professional Viewpoints: NCYE/Research

The modern English alphabet doesn't correspond very accurately to modern English speech; it's a system built on the pronunciation current in London in the seventeenth century, and the language has changed a lot since then. When foreigners say that modern English is hard to learn, they don't mean that speaking it is difficult. They mean that the speeling system seem irrational. Why do we have write and right and rite when we say them all the same, or enough and through and though and thought and cough when we say them all differently?

But the spelling system can't be changed except very slowly, for some good reasons and for some not so good ones. People who have learned the system, or most of it, are emotionally attached to the old ways. Such simplified spellings as nite or thru look wrong to them. When George Bernard Shaw left his fortune for improving English spelling, the British courts declared the will invalid. Other movements for spelling reform have failed miserably. There are sensible reasons for objecting to a change: libraries would become out of date, or as hard to read as Chaucerian English; and a spelling system beautifully adapted to one dialect of English--Oxford speech, for instance--would be a poor fit with the way English is spoken in Brooklyn or Bombay. For ease in communication among speakers of the many dialects of English, we will probably have to keep the archaic spelling system, and students will have to learn it.

Speakers of any English dialect have to make about the same number of adjustments as they learn to spell. We cannot, for most common words, depend on pronumciation to help us, and the advice to "listen and write what you hear" is almost alway misleading. Memorizing spelling lists won't help us to spell words in contextm either. And worrying about spelling, in the first draft of anything, slows down the creative process. Even the "good old-fashioned" spelling bees which enabled a few exceptional spellers to demonstrate their special talents, offers no proof of having helped poor spellers to improve.

Strategies for Action

We can point out that some people have always been "poor spellers"; there is no evidence that present day students spell any worse than their forebears. In fact, the National Assesment scores show that mechanics (which includes spelling) has improved slightly, and that what declined was flexibility and coherence.

We can suggest that many students see less need for spelling, as electronic media make reading and writing seem less important, either for business or for pleasure.

We can discuss the difference between being unable to spell what or were, and being unable to spell broccoli or embarrass." One represents a real spelling (and probably reading) impairment; the other illustrates the need to use a dictionary. And we can emphasize that knowing when, and how, to use a dictionary effectively is more important for mature students than any amount of spelling drill.

We can remind the public that the business world is full of "editors": secretaries who are in effect specialists hired to polish their bosses' spelling, proofreaders who work over the copy journalists turn in. The antiseptic orthography of the world of commerce is deceptive, and the complaint of many businesspeople that their employees can't spell is sometimes disingenuous.

We can, and should, agree that the ability to spell ordinary words with confidence is a basic skill for which the schools are responsible. But we should also insist that conventional spelling is a matter of careful editing, and that people who write in haste often misspell even very ordinary words. This does not mean that they are poor spellers. More likely, they are competent but careless spellers who count on employe(e)(r)s to correct their misspellings or readers to understand their writing despite the spelling errors.

RECENT TRENDS IN LINGUISTICS: IS LINGUISTICS FINALLY BECOMING MEANINGFUL?

Don L. F. Nilsen, Arizona State University

Grammar is not a four-letter word; however, there are people (probably a lot of them) who react much more violently to the term grammar than they do to most four-letter words. And the person who devotes his life to studying grammar, the so-called grammarian, might be described as a person who knows all about communication, but who himself is quite unable to communicate. The grammarian is the person at a cocktail party who never gets to listen to anyone, because people are afraid of making grammatical errors, and if a person does venture to talk with him, you can be sure that there will be no sentences ending with prepositions, or having split infinitives. And there will surely be a sprinkling of shall's, whom's, and correctly formed subjunctive and conditional constructions in the conversation. And although the valiant soul may at times be disinterested, you can be sure he will never be uninterested in a point being made during the conversation.

Somehow the terms grammar and grammarian have developed negative connotations. Let us investigate how these bad connotations came about. Most of the early grammarians considered the study of language to be a social science rather than a natural science. The early European grammarians developed an area of study in which meaning was central. They felt that the primary function of language was communication. The early American grammarians followed the same line of reasoning but they went a step further and began to investigate not so much how people did communicate as how they should communicate and unfortunately they based many of their judgments of correctness on Latin or Greek or British English rather than on the language they were dealing with: the American language. These early grammarians were interested in subtleties of the communication process, and the goal that they set for themselves was to keep the American language from further degeneration. As a matter of fact they were interested in the right thing (communication), but for the wrong reasons.

Then came the scientific revolution with its concentration on people's worship of material gadgetry. The social sciences, and the humanities, and the appreciation of culture and art, all became frills. And for the first time, the study of grammar as a process of communication, i.e., social science, came under criticism by a new group of persons also interested in the study of language, but not as a means of communication so much as a body of well organized and classified data. Rather than explaining language as a communication process, they wanted to develop rigorous methods of organizing and classifying language data. This new group of people termed themselves "linguistic scientists." In their opinion the task of a linguist was to develop a set of techniques which would yield the same results no matter where, when, or by whom they were applied. Their techniques of language analysis can best be compared to the laboratory procedures used by a chemist or a physicist, which are not dependent upon the whims of the individual scientist, and with the results being highly predictable.

At all costs, subjectivity was to be avoided and as a result these linguists were forced to rely on the most objective and the most concrete aspect of language: the phonology, or sounds of the language. Not only did they say that the oral language was more basic and more important than the written language, but they pretty much consider the written language not worthy of serious study, since they considered it to be a mere representation - often not a very accurate representation - of the oral language.

At this stage, linguistics was basically a taxonomic science, and linguists went around classifying phonemes, or intonation contours, or sentences, or parts of sentences. At this time, the linguists were mostly interested in analyzing data, and they became very proficient in this regard. Because of their preoccupations with language corpuses, the linguists of this period provided us with some important insights about the different

historical, geographical, social and formal dialects. Before analyzing a particular bit of language, the linguist would find out as much about the speaker as possible, so that he would be able to determine how various types of dialects differ from each other. A particular linguist, by the name of Henry Lee Smith, Jr., even had a radio program in which he would interview a person for five to ten minutes, and then indicate what part of the country that person came from. In his interview, he would ask the pronunciations of such words as g-r-e-a-s-y, m-e-r-r-y vs. M-a-r-y and m-a-r-r-y, w-a-s-h, n-e-a-r, c-o-t vs. c-a-u-g-h-t, w-i-t-c-h vs. w-h-i-c-h, w-i-t-h, and m-o-u-r-n-i-n-g vs. m-o-r-n-i-n-g. He also had vocabulary questions. For example, he would hold up a handful of those things that Snicker's candy bars are made out of to determine whether they would be called peanuts, ground peas, goobers, goober peas, grubies, pinders, ground nuts, or ground almonds. Of course he also got some clues from the forms of words, as in "It wan't me," or from syntax, as in "He belongs to be careful," and, occasionally, he would get someone from the audience who said something like "you'all carry me home hear," or "That blimey maid was supposed to knock me up this morning." But most of his informants were not that obvious.

The linguists who devoted their time to analyzing corpuses (or samples) of language gave the world a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, language variation. By studying vast quantities of actual language samples, they discovered that while there may be primitive peoples in the world, there are no primitive languages. They discovered that certain minority dialects are often more logically consistent, and more expressive in certain ways, than standard dialects. For example, the standard English expression "She's beautiful" refers indiscriminately to a temporary, or to a long-term condition, whereas a speaker of black English would delete the verb to indicate a temporary state-- "She beautiful" --and would use the unconjugated verb "be" to indicate a long-term condition-- "She be beautiful." And it can further be shown that such nonstandard expressions as hisself, theirselves, you-all, you-uns, youse, ain't, hisn, yourn, ourn, swang, alumnuses, and a great many others are more logical than their standard counterparts. In short, these linguists were insistent that the study of language should be descriptive rather than prescriptive, and their descriptions of language and language variation were truly remarkable.

The unfortunate difficulty with this descriptive approach was that in order to describe something, there must be something to describe. And these linguists therefore felt that the only way to study language was to study language samples, or corpuses. Since they were trying to be totally objective, they felt that they should work with the most tangible and objective aspects of language first, and go from there to the less tangible. Since the whole linguistic movement was a movement against prescriptivism, they felt that anything prescriptive, or even anything subjective, was outside of the realm of linguistic consideration. It was because of this orientation that linguists set up three levels of linguistic tangibility. The most tangible of these levels was phonology (the sounds); the next most tangible was morphology (the words and affixes); and the least tangible was the syntax (word order).

The history of linguistics has been a gradual drift from the most tangible and most concrete aspects of language toward the more intangible and more abstract aspects. The first linguists set up three levels of analysis: phonology, morphology and syntax. Not only did they consider phonology central and most basic, but they went so far as to say that a linguist should not consider morphological or syntactic problems at all, until all of the problems of phonology had been satisfactorily resolved. These early linguists didn't even consider the semantic level, the level of meaning, as being within the realm of scientific study, since it was too intangible, too abstract, too subjective. Later, the main stream of linguistics shifted to morphological considerations, as linguists developed methods of breaking a sentence down into two parts, breaking each of these into two parts, and continuing the process until the sentence was totally decomposed into a set of hierarchically related morphemes. This method was called Immediate-Constituent analysis, and was an objective and mechanistic procedure. Still later came the generative-

transformational linguists, who devised mechanical procedures that would indicate a syntactic (as well as semantic) relationship between such expressions as the following:

1. John gave Mary a new automobile.
2. A new automobile was given to Mary by John.
3. Mary was given a new automobile by John.
4. Did John give Mary a new automobile?
5. John didn't give Mary a new automobile.
6. Didn't John give Mary a new automobile?
7. John didn't give Mary a new automobile, did he?
8. John's giving Mary a new automobile surprised us.
9. For John to give Mary a new automobile...was imprudent.
10. That John gave Mary a new automobile...is a fait accompli.
11. He didn't know...what John gave Mary.

and so on. At first this was thought of as a mechanical technique of manipulation, and was designed to explain the syntactic relationships between the various words in a sentence. If a particular sentence was ungrammatical, or semi-grammatical, or metaphorical, then its negative counterpart, its gerund counterpart, its passive counterpart, and all other transformations that related to it were equally ungrammatical, semi-grammatical, or metaphorical. For example, "I saw a horse smoke a dozen oranges" is grammatically neither better nor worse than its negative counterpart-- "I didn't see a horse smoke a dozen oranges" or its passive counterpart-- "I saw a dozen oranges smoked by a horse," etc. Early transformational linguist were not upset by the fact that an affirmative sentence does not have the same meaning as does its negative or question counterpart. Transformations were devised to explain co-occurrence relationships between the various parts of a sentence. The fact that many transformations further explained certain paraphrase relations was a fortunate coincidence, and one not necessarily suggested by Harris, or even by his student Chomsky in their earliest treatments. In fact, one of the hot issues going on in linguistics at the present time is whether or not transformations must necessarily preserve meaning.

So it was somewhat by accident that "meaning" finally got its foot in the linguist's door. Two very important distinctions began to emerge and to receive treatment by linguists. The first was the distinction between surface structure and deep structure; the second was the distinction between performace and competence. Let us first consider the surface-structure deep-structure distinction. Consider three sentences:

1. The horse kicked John
2. The horse was kicked by John
3. John kicked the horse

The same three linguistic units occur in all three of these sentences: the horse, kicked, and John. In addition, these three linguistic units occur in the same order in sentences 1 and 2. Yet we know intuitively that "The horse kicked John" does not mean the same as "The horse was kicked by John." We also know intuitively that sentence 2 ("The horse was kicked by John") does mean the same as number 3 ("John kicked the horse") even though in the passive sentence "The horse was kicked by John" the three linguistic units do not occur in the same linear order as they do in its active counterpart "John kicked the horse." On the basis of this kind of evidence, (and evidence from co-ocurrence restrictions), it was concluded that "The horse kicked John" is not transformationally related to "The horse was kicked by John" even though these two sentences are superficially very similar, and it is further concluded that "The horse was kicked by John" is transformationally related to "John kicked the horse" even though these two sentences are superfically less similar. This example should serve to point up the difference between surface structure and deep structure. The active sentence and its passive counterpart have quite different surface structures, but they have the same deep structure. Chomsky has gone so far as to suggest

that such concepts as subject and direct object have surface-structure and deep-structure counterparts. The sentence "The horse was kicked by John" has the horse as its surface-structure subject, and John as its surface-structure object of a preposition; but in the deep structure, the horse is the direct object, and John is the subject. This means that the active sentence and its passive counterpart will have the same deep-structure subject (John), and the same deep-structure object (the horse), but of course their surface-structure subjects and objects, etc. will be different. On the other hand, both "The horse kicked John" and "The horse was kicked by John" have the same surface-structure subjects (the horse), but their deep-structure relationships will be different. And this accounts for their different co-occurrence relations, and for their different meanings.

Charles Fillmore feels that Chomsky's deep structure is not nearly deep enough. Chomsky's transformations can explain the syntactic and semantic relationships of regular sentences to their corresponding passives, gerundives, infinitives, and relative clauses, etc. But Fillmore suggests that Chomsky's model does not adequately explain the paraphrase relationships among such sentences as the following:

1. John broke the window with a hammer
2. A hammer broke the window
3. The window broke

It is conceivable that any one of these sentences could be used to describe the same real-world event. They are therefore paraphrases, but are not handled as such in Chomsky's model. Fillmore proposes that John is the Agent, that a hammer is the Instrument and that the window is the Object in the deep structures of all three of these sentences, and he proposes that if there is an Agent, this must be the surface-structure subject; that if there is an Instrument but no Agent, the Instrument must be the surface-structure subject; and that the Object can be the surface-structure subject if and only if there is neither an Agent nor an Instrument in the surface structure of the sentence. It can be seen, then, that Fillmore's term Agent is the same as Chomsky's term deep-structure-direct-object, except that it is deeper. Fillmore labeled his Agent, Instrument, Object, etc. deep cases. And the kind of grammar he proposes is called "Case Grammar." The English word case is ambiguous, and therefore case grammarians are constantly tempted to make puns. For example, the definitive article for this model is entitled "The Case for Case," and one of the controversies in the theory is whether or not the Instrumental Case should be subdivided into a number of more homogeneous cases, including the "Tool" case.

The case grammarians are not the only linguists who have broken away from Chomsky's camp because of a feeling that Chomsky and his followers placed too much emphasis on syntax and not enough on semantics. Probably the most popular camp in linguistics today is that of the generative semanticists, who believe that there is in fact no difference between syntax and semantics. Consider the paraphrase relationship existing between a sentence like "Oswald assassinated Kennedy" and one like "Oswald caused Kennedy, who was an important person, to become dead." The generative semanticists would say that there are special types of transformations that will change "become dead" into "die" or change "cause to become dead" into "kill," or "cause an important person to become dead" into "assassinate," by a process which they call "predicate raising," which is itself a particular type of lexical packing. Although this type of transformation is very different from the type allowed in Chomsky's model, it does provide a direct route between semantics and syntax.

There are a number of other splinter groups that have broken off from Chomsky's model. Dwight Bolinger, Uriel Weinreich, Wallace Chafe, and others have all proposed systems which they feel are superior to Chomsky's model. But this is not to say that the Chomsky camp has disintegrated altogether. There are still large numbers of Chomskyites, and although they continue to maintain that the basic component is syntax

rather than seantics, most of their concentration at the moment is on semantics. The Chomsky model, which is now called the "standard theory" or the "interpretive semantic theory" uses projection rules rather than transformations in dealing with semantics. They conceive of each sense of a word as being s bundle of semantic features. The noun ball, for example, would have three senses, one being a sad emotional experience. The projection rules used by interpretive semanticists serve the purpose of amalgamating items together, and declaring incompatibilities among these items. For example, they would say that the sentence "She had a ball," is ambiguous because the verb have is compatible with all three senses of ball; therefore, "She had a ball," could mean that she held a fancy dance, that she possessed a round spherical object, or that she cried. The sentence "She kicked a ball," has only one meaning, however, since a person can kick only something which has the semantic feature (+Concrete). And "She whistled a ball" is semantically anomalous because the verb "whistle" is incompatible with all three of the senses of the noun ball. This is not to say that "She whistled a ball" is a bad sentence, or even that it is a meaningless sentence. One of the strongest forces in linguistics is the ability of humans to extend the basic interpretations of sentences until the sentence in some way relates to its context. Chomsky's famous sentence "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously," which was first given as an example of a grammatically correct but semantically anomalous sentence, has by now almost achieved the status of poetry, and has been given numerous interpretations by numerous linguists. But it is nevertheless true that "She kicked the ball" is in some sense a more acceptable sentence than is "She whistled the ball."

Linguists began as a model of performance, that is, as a model to analyze what people had actually said or written; and recent work in linguistics has considered it as a model of competence, that is, as a model of the grammar which is part of the human brain that gives a person the ability to identify a sentence (either his own or some one else's) as correctly formed, anomalous, ambiguous, or whatever. This competence model cannot be based on actual language samples, since the speaker is able to make such judgments even for sentences he has never heard before, such as "Whenever I see a pretty girl, I eat a handful of radishes." And another reason that it cannot be based on actual language samples is that certain of the rules of language can theoretically apply an unlimited number of times. Consider a sentence like "This is the cow with the crumpled horn, that kicked the maiden all forlorn, that killed the cat, that ate the rat, that lived in the house that Jack built." This sentence has six relative clauses embedded into it. On the basis of actual language samples (that is, performance), there is no way to determine how many relative clauses are possible in such a sentence. The competence model merely provides a machinery that will be produced by such a rule, however, will be limited by such things as the desire of the speaker to stay with this sentence rather than go on to another, his creative ability, his attention span, his alertness, and so on. But all of these are constraints on performance. Theoretically, there is no maximum limit, and a grammar has no business saying that no sentence with more than thirty words (or six relative clauses embedded) is possbile, just because such sentences don't occur in a particular corpus, or for that matter in all of the corpuses that have been collected in the history of linguistics.

What follows are some English sentences illustrating the lingusitic concepts that are presently being proposed and refined. These examples are taken from the linguistic literature, and collectively they give some insight into the nature of meaning. Because of their new interest in units of discourse larger than the sentence, linguists have begun to study what is called anaphora, or pronoun reference, since pronoun reference often goes beyond the sentence. They are also interested in what Postal calls "anaphoric islands," which are sentences that is no expressed antecedent. An example would be "Mary is an orphan, and I don't have any either," where most people would realize that in the second clause we are referring to parents, because the meaning of orphan is a "person who doesn't have any parents." However, although this sentence is logically possible, it cannot occur in

English.

Linguists are also interested in set membership, again because this has application to discourse analysis. Notice that we can say "I bought a new car, but the horn didn't work." Ordinarily it is not possible to use the definite article the unless we make the noun specific either immediately before, as in "I bought a new horn, but for some reason the horn didn't work," or immediately afterwards, as in "The horn which I just bought doesn't work." But in the sentence under consideration--"I bought a new car, but the horn didn't work," we don't have to say anything about the horn to qualify it for use with the definite article, because we have mentioned car in the previous sentence, and we know that typically cars have horns (as do cows, by the way.)

Linguists are presently also interested in what they called "happiness conditions" or "felicity conditions." These are the real-world conditions that must be in effect for a particular sentence to be appropriate. We cannot use the imperative sentence, "Close the door!" unless there is a door, and unless there would be no confusion as to what I mean by the door, and unless the door is open, and unless the person I am speaking to is awake, and speaks English, and would be inclined to do what I told him to do, and a number of other things. All of these things are presuppositions of the imperative sentence "Close the door!" They are facts which the speaker must suppose before he is able to utter the command "Close the door!" appropriately. Notice that the negative command "Don't close the door!" has exactly the same presuppositions as does the affirmative command, except for the state of the door as being either closed or open.

Linguists are presently also interested in truth conditions. What about the sentence like "The king of France is bald."? Would this sentence be true or false? In fact, the sentence would be neither true nor false, but rather inappropriate, since the presuppositions (that there is one and only one king of France) are incorrect, the assertion (that he is bald) is inappropriate. An assertion, therefore, can be either true, false, or inappropriate.

This brings us to another semantic area which is presently of interest to linguists--implication. What are the implications of a sentence like "John called Mary a virgin, and then he insulted her," and are the implications any different for a sentence like "John called Mary a virgin, and then she insulted him."?

Linguists are also interested in semantic redundancy, like "I saw a naked nude," and in contradictions, like "The sentence I am presently reading is false," and in analytic truths or tautologies, like "Kings are monarchs," and in entailment, like "John is a University Professor" entails (I suppose) "John can read and write," and self-answered questions, like "What is the color of my red tie," and paraphrase, like "William hit a policeman" is a paraphrase of "Bill slugged a cop," and semantic similarity, like "Aunt, cow, nun, sister, woman, filly, and actress all have the same semantic feature--female," and various types of antonomy, like "He whispered," versus "He shouted," and superordination, whereby we know that a human is automatically an animal, which is automatically a living thing, which is automatically a concrete object, etc., and semantic anomaly, like "I once saw a smelly itch," and semantic ambiguity, like "Take your pick!", and impossible answer like using "John loves to eat fruit," as an answer to the question "When did John arrive?". In fact, linguists are presently interested in any type of information that can give them insight into the complex world of meaning. In his recent book entitled Semantic Theory, Jerrold Katz states the problem of semantics quite succinctly: "I have yet to see any problem, however complicated, which, when you looked at it the

right way, did not become still more complicated."

But linguists are finally meeting the challenge. In the history of language study, we've traversed a long and arduous path. We started out being primarily interested in meaning, and we ended up with meaning, so many people may contend that we haven't gone anywhere. But I believe that we have gone a great distance, and although we are now back home, I hope that we can benefit from our experiences.

ROOTING OUT

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A simple assignment combines science, art, and English into a creative endeavor that makes students more aware of words and their origins. From a list of roots used in science, students are to make up, define, and illustrate hypothetical words. Following are an abbreviated root list and some interesting student creations.

ROOT LIST

pyro - fire
mega - great
phobe - one who fears
lith(o) - stone
maniac - one who is obsessed with
vore - one who eats
anthro - man
podal - footed
hemo - blood
poly - many

WORDS

polypodal - many footed
anthrolith - man of stone
pyrovore - fire-eater
hemophobe - one who fears blood
polypodalmegahemovore - the great many footed blood eater

TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

HOW CAN MEDIA HELP?

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There is an immediate need to reintroduce the study of English language to the English curriculum--at both the elementary and secondary levels. I say reintroduce because English language study is being short-changed in the school curriculum. George Hillocks, Jr., in his book Alternatives in English: A Critical Appraisal of Elective Programs notes that only three percent of the 1,990 courses listed in his study dealt with the medium of expression, i.e., using language as language. He states: "The study of language as language is virtually ignored in most programs; in a good many programs it is totally ignored."[1] My observations of curricula as I visit schools and talk with teachers and students bring me to concur with Hillocks' opinion. And even when students are involved in language study, they are usually plodding through some form of grammatical analysis, e.g., taking apart a sentence and labeling its parts! The students are bored; the teacher is bored; and exciting, relevant areas of language study are ignored.

Why is this the time for language study? Perhaps because there has been no other time in history when language has been so widely used as a vehicle for persuasion--persuasion not only to buy one product over another but also, persuasion to accept as truth a carefully disguised lie. Students are part of a society which has at its disposal over 9,500 periodicals, over 11,000 newspapers, and televisions and radios in practically every home. These are the media; language is the persuasive tool. Whether it be the language of advertising or the language of politics, students should read and listen critically. But semantics is only one of the areas students should investigate. Additional areas that can provide vast resources for English language study include the nature of language, its structure, usage items pertinent to Standard English as well as other varieties of English, language heritage, geographical and social dialects, and the silent language.[2]

Since the media are such strong forces in our society, they must be an integral part of the English language study. I suggest a wide variety of media for students to consider: films and filmstrips, music, tapes, newspapers, magazines, television, radio, bulletin boards, bumper stickers, billboards, and collages.

Nature of Language

To study the nature of language enables the student to get an overview of the English language. It serves as an introduction to language study in general and to the study of the English language in particular. A collage elicits a variety of responses when used as an activity in which students share what language is and what it does for or to them. Each collage is individualistic since each represents the student's personal response to what language means to him.

I have used quite successfully two commercially prepared programs which provide overviews of language study. Speaking of Language from Guidance Associates is a filmstrip and cassette/record program designed to teach two concepts: what language is and how it operates. A sound/slide program from the Center for the Humanities entitled Language, Signs, and Symbols: How Man Communicates (Part I) deals with an overview of language, too. Both are well done and can be taught effictively in the classroom.

Newspapers, magazines, flyers, billboards, bumper stickers, and television provide abundant sources for students to find language used in special ways. For example, the ads placed by Bell Telephone Company during the fuel shortage urged readers and listeners

to take their "pleasure trips" by phone and save fuel and money at the same time; a flyer from Harry and David, a fruit orchard in Medford, Oregon, announcing the arrival of the buyer's Maverick Pears contains this delightful use of language: "As you can see, this is a rough'n ready box of rough'n bumpy Royal Riviera Pears. Some of 'em grew into shapes sort? like Queen Victoria outside, yet just as regal inside . . . some got big friendly freckles where the Oregon sun nuzzled 'em too lovingly . . . and some got bumptious where maybe a jet butterfly whapped them." And who can ever forget the sometimes-difficult-to-understand language choices of the one and only Howard Cosell. These examples are but a few of the wide variety available for students' use in exploring the nature of language.

Geographical and Social Dialects

Differences in the way people speak is a vitally important part of classroom study. Students need to see that difference is not synonymous with inferiority. Therefore, an exploration of geographical and social dialects is a must! To do this, students may use commercially prepared tapes and records of dialect differences (Americans Speaking, NCTE) or they may choose to prepare their own data. Students prepare a tape recording of a carefully selected discourse containing particular vocabulary and syntactical expressions unique to their location. They then send their tape to another school in another part of the country. I believe students find this exchange of tapes much more meaningful than a simple study of dialects from a textbook

Related activities complementary to the tape exchange can include the preparation of a collage or bulletin board giving examples of dialect differences. Emphasis should be given, too, to the language differences among Standard English, Black English, and other varieties. The activity may be expanded to include the differences between British and American English. Recordings of well-known people who are associated with a particular section of the country may provide additional data for students. Speeches by the Kennedys and former President Johnson, readings by Robert Frost, Eudora Welty, and Carl Sandburg are available. Two television shows come to mind as possible sources for dialect study. The "down home" speech of "The Waltons" and the speech of the delightful Mrs. Naugatuck on "Maude" offer supplementary material for students studying language variations.

Language Heritage

While the history of the English language provides ample material to explore, the use of media to teach this section is somewhat limited. Our Changing Language, a record from NCTE, offers brief excerpts of our language at different stages of its life. "The Alphabet--The Mark of Man," a McGraw Hill-Contemporary Films release, gives the historical point of view of the alphabet. Both of these may be effectively used if teachers use these media as they relate language history to literature of different periods.

Large posters and bulletin boards are useful in displaying examples of the various influences on the English language by means of a "language tree" or "language river." This graphic representation of how English has changed from the language of Beowulf to that of 20th Century man, shows students a comparison of these influences through the size, shape, and position of the descriptive elements.

Another activity concerning language heritage involves students investigating current slang terms and comparing them to slang of yesteryear. By using libraries and newspaper files, they may secure editions of old newspapers and scour them for interesting slang expressions. Gathering this information and comparing what mom and dad, or grandpa and grandma said to that they themselves say gives the student an interesting, rewarding, and original activity in language study.

The Structure of English

The question of whether to teach grammar or not will not be explored here. That question has been cussed and discussed many times and to little avail. However, if teachers continue to teach the structure of English to students in elementary and secondary schools, they perhaps can make their job more effective and more pleasant by using the media.

Certainly newspapers and magazines can play an important role in the study of English structure. To find a variety of sentence patterns in newspaper reports and magazine feature articles adds a bit of realism that isn't found in textbook exercises. After a discussion of these patterns and the transformations that have occurred, students may follow up with writing of their own. Particular mechanical conventions are taught from these media as well.

Students enjoy looking for problems in structure often found in their daily reading. Headline ambiguities may provide a chuckle; but, in addition, the discussion that follows may give insight into specific structural difficulties. A number of these ambiguous headlines have been printed: "Grandmother of Eight Makes Hole in One," "Meat Head Fights Hike in Minimum Pay," "Dealers Will Hear Car Talk Friday Noon." And, more recently, this headline appeared in an Ohio newspaper: "Mrs. Woody Hayes Hit With Rotary Club." Classified sections of newspapers are good sources for use and misuse of English structure, too. For example, this ad appeared not long ago: "For Sale: A piano by a woman with heavy carved legs."

Teachers can complement this study with the visual reinforcement that comes from bulletin boards. A display of sentence patterns, examples of variant spellings, and/or groupings of different ways of rearranging words in a sentence makes the students conscious of structural variety in their language. This is not to say that we need to hit students over the head with grammar teaching; quite the contrary, this method simply supplements what they are doing in their reading, writing, and speaking.

Usage

Exploring usage through the media is an eventful trip. There are so many approaches to take. After finding examples of "usage problems" in newspapers and magazines, students can discuss these possible "problems." Is one way the right way? Is it better to talk of appropriateness in language usage rather than correctness? To make this activity as meaningful as possible, teachers should become familiar with Robert C. Pooley's book Teaching English Usage (NCTE, 1974). Students may use portions of this book to compare what they find in the media with examples given by Pooley. Students can also study usage through the sports section of the newspaper. The number of ways that writers can indicate that one team has won over another is astounding!

Pictures can be used effectively to make students aware of usage varieties. The pictures offer situations for the students to indicate possible dialogue that the character(s) in the photographs might be using. All levels and varieties of language are included. Again, emphasis is given to the situation, audience, speaker, and language when discussing the variations in language.

Television is the source of many new words and expressions. Students are often surprised when they realize how these expressions have crept into their vocabulary. This becomes evident very quickly when they hear "dingbat" and "meathead" in their conversations. These Archie Bunkerisms will come and go as have other slang expressions; however, it is important for students to note the impact that media has made on their language.

The euphemistic tone that our language has is still another area worthy of student attention. Whether it be in the language of government, advertising, or everyday conversation, euphemisms are used extensively. A discussion of the apparent lack of euphemisms found in television talk shows, variety programs, and soap opera (pregnant was a no-no not too many years ago) and the overwhelming use of euphemisms in government reporting on government activity enables students to see the use and abuse of language. Collages, posters, and bulletin boards are effective means to display these euphemisms and their use visually.

Semantics

Teachers may find "A," a film from McGraw-Hill Contemporary Films, an effective way to introduce semantics to their students. This short film clearly reflects the concept of language control. Follow-up activities are necessary in order for student to experience how the language of advertising and politics has indeed attempted to control their thoughts and actions. To do this, teachers can use newspapers, magazines, radio, and television extensively.

Commericals provide one of the best means for showing this persuasion. A little research by students will attest to commercials' success: more people have bought more products that they really don't need than ever before. It is imperative that students know how the commercial works and why it is so effective. The film "Buy, Buy" from Churchill Films (Los Angeles, California) provides students with necessary background information about the making of a commercial. In addition to how the commercial is made, the film also gives an interesting view of ethics in advertising. By studying advertisements on radio, television, and in newspapers, students learn of such techniques as celebrity endorsements, glittering generalities, the various claims that mean virtually nothing of the product's worth, and the use of sexist language in the advertisements. Often these filmed commercials can be brought into the classroom since many radio and television stations are willing to give schools unwanted films. By analyzing the language--verbal and nonverbal, students come to realize the tremendous power the advertiser has when he uses the propaganda techniques to persuade the public to buy, accept, and/or conform to his product and/or idea. In addition to these techniques, students enjoy seeking out euphemistic words often found in the ads: "glamour," "chic," "sociable," "over-sized," "pre-owned," "better than ever." For example, I recently saw a billboard which described used Cadillacs as "young and beautiful, with some experience." Students soon see how easy it has been for advertisers to sell them a product without ever having told them what's in it and why it is better than any other product--Pepsi Cola, case in point.

Politics is another area which uses and abuses language, and media usually brings the message. At no other time in our history have government officials used media so effectively to lie publically to the American people. The recent crises in the U.S. Government clearly illustrate the attempt to use language to control the public's thinking.

It is the teacher's responsibility to help students go beyond the surface level of what they read and hear. Students should read newspapers very carefully, listen critically to radio and television. News broadcasts, press conferences, and press releases should be analyzed for stock phrases, qualifying statements, neologisms, passive voice, and jargon. For example, students must get beyond the government's use of "reconnaissance force" to the more truthful description of "search and destroy," from "termination with extremer prejudice" to "murder," and from "intelligence gathering operations" to "robbery." A discussion of these terms clearly indicates to students how the government uses the language and media to protect itself. With the onslaught of recession and inflation and the continuance of the energy crisis, students will have ample material from which to gather examples of the

use, misuse, and abuse of the English language in government today.

Two recently released media kits provide effective teaching aids for the teacher of semantics. Semantics: Language and Behavior (Concept Media, Mesa, California) and The Persuasion Box (Learning Seed Co.) offer many varied activities in the study of language and persuasion.

Silent Language

Television, film, and magazines contain excellent examples of the silent language. Commercials use nonverbal persuasion effectively: wide angle lens shots so the automobile looks so much longer, smoother, and luxurious; conservative appearance of the announcer to give added authority. A study of how TV and film personalities use hand gestures and facial expressions in the communication process is fascinating for students at all levels, too. In addition, magazine pictures communicate many ideas nonverbally. "No Man Is An Island" (Dana Productions, North Hollywood, California) and "Replay" (McGraw Hill Contemporary Films) are two films designed for classroom use which provide an abundance of nonverbal communication. Students have fun and learn about the total communication process by creating "un-word" collages, bulletin boards, and/or dictionaries.

A two-part filmstrip unit entitled Exploring Nonverbal Communication (Center for Advanced Study of Human Communication, Columbus, Ohio) examines how we use body language and space to communicate nonverbally. The two parts, "Kinesics: Understanding Body Language" and "Proxemics: Space in Human Perspective" are short, direct, and to the point. They are professionally narrated and photographed; this company offers supplementary teaching aids as well.

The language component of the English curriculum is important and should be an integral part of the program of study. Media, it seems to me, offers a viable means to help teach that part of the curriculum.

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[1]George Hillocks, Jr. Alternatives in English: A Critical Appraisal of Elective Programs. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE. 1972, p. 24.

[2]John H. Bushman. "The Power of Language: Can the Student Survive Without It?" English Journal, November, 1970, pps. 1091-1095.

ORWELL'S INCOMPLETE RHETORIC: "POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE"

William T. Ross, University of South Florida

A quick look at a number of collections of essays designed for Freshman English will confirm anyone's suspicion that George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" is one of the most frequently reprinted essays in existence, perhaps the most frequently reprinted one dealing with language and style. And it has been my experience that when it is available it tends to be assigned. None of this is surprising. The essay's stressing of self-awareness, honesty, and clarity, and its promotion of a simple, terse style are identical to the compositional values which Richard Latham perceives to be the main bias of most freshman rhetorics.[1]

But the more I reread Orwell's effort, the more I am convinced that, both as a hermeneutic and as a rhetoric, the essay is seriously defective and, for students, potentially misleading. Its analysis of prose leaves too many questions unasked, and its advice is highly reductive.

In terms of cultural forces it is not at all difficult to explain Orwell's--or the essay's--popularity; nor is it difficult, in historical context, to explain what I take to be the shortcomings of the essay. But there is hardly enough time in Freshman English to demonstrate the accuracy of Orwell's picture of himself as a plain-speaking man surrounded by double-talking, doctrinaire party hacks, of a man determined to hold his own political persuasion (the Left) to as hard an accounting as that of his opponents.[2]

If there were, perhaps students would surmise that Orwell's own convictions that politics are permanently important and that every issue is a political issue are responsible for the primary confusion in the essay. One is never quite sure whether he is describing--and providing a cure for--political writing or all writing. Orwell's first sentence asserts that the English language in general is in bad shape; at least one of his examples of egregiously unfit prose is not concerned with politics; and his advice, which we will examine later, seems to be directed at all writing. Yet most of his examples of inflated diction, clumsy circumlocutions, dead metaphors and the like come from politics. And as soon as he asserts that such dead, ready-made language "will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself," he is able to claim that "the special connection between politics and the debasement of language [now] becomes clear." "In our time," he begins the next paragraph, "it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing."

The rest of the essay is almost completely devoted to an examination of political writing with Orwell vacillating back and forth about whether the vagueness of current political writing is due to its being "the defence of the indefensible" or to a simple lack of feeling and thinking on the part of the author. In the last paragraph, he is still dealing primarily with political writing, rejecting those who would proscribe discussion of all abstract terms (like "fascism") and promising that simplifying English will free one "from the worst follies of [political] orthodoxy."

Thus Orwell's lament for the condition of the English language turns out mostly to be revulsion at the abuses of political language in his time. And his obsession with these abuses not only makes it difficult to make distinctions between political writing and others, but between clumsy language and syntax per se and the author's supposed sincerity--always an important if elusive quality in politics. It is interesting to see how Orwell hangs himself on this point. In his discussion of political euphemisms, he invents "some comfortable . . . professor defending Russian totalitarianism." "While freely conceding," Orwell has him say,

> that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.

According to Orwell, this means "I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so." Suddenly it is not the evasive quality of the prose itself, but the fundamental honesty of the speaker which is in question. Orwell has turned an argument to historical inevitability into one based on coldly pragmatic considerations. There is no way that the two passages can be synonymous, though Orwell's paraphrase may indeed be the genuine feelings the speaker is dishonestly trying to hide. But this possibility has nothing to do with slovenly language. Taking both passages at face value, Orwell, in this case, has made himself out to be contemptuous of a mind trying to make distinctions.

Presumably with reference to his mythical professor's statement, Orwell remarks in the next paragraph that "the great enemy of clear language is insincerity." But this is a point hard to take and harder to prove. There is no reason why a perfectly clear statement ("I love you") cannot be completely insincere. In fact, Orwell can never quite turn insincerity into a theory of language--and, no wonder, since insincerity is a matter of intention, not expression. Earlier in the essay he has denounced the use of certain code words, words whose connotative value is much stronger than their genuine denotative content (e.g., democracy, socialism, patriotic, etc.). And his point is well taken, since such words can obviously be used in simple, straightforward sentences which are unclear not because of syntactic obfuscation but because of a multiplicity of meanings surrounding the key term. But then Orwell goes on to say that such words are used often "in a consciously dishonest way."

> That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like Marshall Petain was a true patriot, The Soviet Press is the freest in the world, The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution, are almost always made with intent to deceive.

But Orwell cannot have it both ways. Either these words have no common meaning, in which case the writer cannot hope to deceive a common audience, or they do and the writer is simply lying. What Orwell never derives is a theory of semantic branching; that is, the perfectly understandable--and not necessarily dishonest--seizing of a common term and redefining it to suit a new occasion. Any of the above statements, if fitted into a larger context, would probably be accompanied by an attempt to make the reader see the necessity for a more "correct" understanding of the key term and thus of the validity of the complete statement. This is a technique of almost all the great Victorian prose writers. Whether it is used honestly or not depends on our perception of the writer's true opinion--a fact not easily ascertainable and never available strictly from his prose. The prose itself may be a model of good argumentation.

It is noteworthy that the disdain for connotation continues throughout the essay, leading Orwell to declare at one point that "the sole aim of metaphor is to call up a visual image." In advancing this definition, Orwell is reacting against such stale and mixed metaphors of the World War II era as "The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song," or "the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot" (his examples). But his reaction has swung so far back into the area of "clarity" that it is neither descriptive or actual writing nor very good rhetorical advice. In fact, it is almost impossible advice to follow. Orwell's last metaphor in the essay is a case in point: ". . . from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase . . . some lump of verbal

refuse . . .into the dustbin where it belongs." Presumably one does get an image, but one also gets a very definite attitude to boot--and that attitude, Orwell's final, defining statement of his position, is just as important as the clarity or freshness of the image per se.

Most of Orwell's confusions and shortcomings, in fact, arise from his inability to have a pluralistic concept of the possibilities of prose- That different occasions call for different styles, different presentations of self, different tactics, is simply beyond him. Note, for example, the advice he gives to other writers, almost all of which implies a faceless, economical, strictly informative prose. A writer, he claims, should ask himself four questions before beginning to write: "What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?" Elsewhere he encourages the avoidance of the passive voice, jargon, and barbarous constructions. It is interesting that Orwell, probably because of his great mistrust of manipulation, does not encourage his reader to ask himself either to whom is this addressed, or, how will my choices in diction, syntax, image or figure affect the impression of my self projected by my prose? Both are crucial, for without them Orwell's additional advice "to let the meaning choose the word and not the other way around" is woefully deficient because it rests on a strictly denotative definition of meaning.

Orwell could have set himself a problem to test this point. One of the essay's better-known passages is the re-writing (in Bureaucratese) of a well-known passage from Ecclesiastes:

> Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

Orwell should have wondered if the advice offered in his essay would be sufficient to make his bureaucrat change this passage into something approximating Ecclesiastes. Of course, it would not. The passage above has meaning and it is hard (logically impossible even) to posit that the words chose the meaning rather than vice versa. True, it might be more readable if the passive constructions were removed and if one or two images were inserted. And yet concreteness and freshness of image and terseness are the only changes Orwell suggests, and concreteness in particular is what he obviously takes to be the major advantage of Ecclesiastes over his bureaucrat. But the differences are far more profound. Here is Ecclesiastes:

> I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Without going into an exhaustive analysis, it is obvious that the first seven words of the passage suggest some sudden cleansing of the sight, some kind of epiphanic moment of personal revelation, that the enumeration of illogical rewards to the slow, weak, foolish and so forth not only sets up a consciously metaphoric pattern, but at the same time gives an indication of where values reside in human affairs (even if they are illogically overturned on occasion by chance) and furthermore, that the enumerative pattern itself reminds one that a conscious craftsman is at work here, and gives pleasure not just because of its content, or the sharpness of its imagery, but for the very play of rhythm itself. In other words, the audience is able to witness a rhetorician at work. Overall there is a kind of mellow cyncism suffusing the passage, a cynicism that the personal pronoun and the verb "saw" both suggest is based on personal experience which has wisened but not embittered.

The parody, of course, is more replete with implications than Orwell probably intends. The impersonal and passive constructions, the detached, quasi-scientific vocabulary, and the appeal to "objective consideration" all suggest a faceless bureaucrat writing an "objective report." Of course we should join Orwell in suggesting that he write better, but does his occasion for writing at all allow him to write like Ecclesiastes? If he is writing for his fellow bureaucrats, can he afford the eccentric individualism of the Biblical cynic, or should he try to manifest his own personal presence through perhaps an occasional interpolated image or metaphor--just enough along with a more direct writing style to let the audience know that there is a consciousness, though not an obtrusively egotistical one, behind the report's prose? Better yet, shouldn't that consciousness or presence manifest itself through a demonstrated ability to wade through the investigations of "contemporary phenomena" using expertise, judgment and common sense to separate the worthwhile investigations from the worthless? This, it strikes me would be helpful rhetorical advice. To suggest that he become an Ecclesiastes, assuming he had the temperament for it, would really be predicting that someone else, equally bad, would have to write the report. We would be no better off.

I am suggesting that Orwell simply cannot handle problems of occasion or persona. For him, the main quality of discursive prose is its honesty, and that can only be achieved through straightforward exposition without any conscious artifice, without any consideration of who is being addressed, and without any overt or subliminal appeals to the audience's feelings. That the stance thus engendered is itself a persona, that it constitues a public self just as false (and true) as any other a writer can adopt escapes Orwell altogether. "I have not here," he protests, "been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not concealing or preventing thought." But he cannot have his restricted definition of "literary use " Following his advice will have its own literary effect on the reader. It will, like any other advice, produce a prose that the reader will respond to by positing a persona or author, by giving that persona certain qualities, and by judging--aesthetically as well as morally--the quality of his bluntness, the sharpness of his images. The consubstantial purpose of rhetoric--to use Kenneth Burke's term--the joining of one consciousness with another, will not be nullified by an anti-rhetoric rhetoric Nor, despite Orwell's anti-persuasive bias, will the writer fail to be sermonic, in Richard Weaver's phrase, if he is writing about something he cares about as much as Orwell does politics and language. Orwell's figures, his consciously expressed concluding desire, and his direct advice to the reader all reflect his suasive purpose.

It is interesting that in the same year that "Politics" appeared, Orwell was asked to respond to the topic, "Why I write." His response shows a much greater awareness of the possibilities and inevitabilities of prose than his better known essay After describing his early years and his constant desire, even from the age of five or six, to be a writer, Orwell lists four "great motives" which he thinks in differing proportions impel every writer: "Sheer egoism," "Aesthetic enthusiasm," "Historical impulse," and "Political purpose."[3]

The third reason is themost closely aligned with the general thrust of "Politics." Orwell defines historical impulse as "the desire to see things as they are, to find out true facts and store them up for the use of posterity." The fourth--"using the word 'political' in the widest possible sense," he insists-- is intriguing because it admits exactly what he implicitly denies in "Politics " That is, that writing is persuasive, that the writer is never "genuinely free from political bias," from a "desire to push the world in a certain direction."

What is far more interesting, and certainly less predictable, are the first two reasons given. For these admit, as Orwell amplifies them, both a "desire to seem clever" and "the perception of beauty in the external world, or on the other hand in words and their right arrangement." Nothing could be more opposed to the utilitarian point of view in "Politics" nor more consonant with Richard Lanham's insistence that prose is not only a case of the meaning choosing the word but a product of homo ludens, of man's attempt to satisfy his play impulse and his style hunger. For Lanham, prose is "a pleasure, a grace, a joy, a delight" and it is refreshing and reassuring to see Orwell, who has been used to so long in freshman rhetorics as an advocate of the plain, functional style, admit and insist on the aesthetic dimensions of prose.[4]

Despite my qualifications about "Politics and the English Language," it is certainly too good an essay on its explicit topic to be sacrificed. But is it asking too much for Orwell's more comprehensive definition of the possibilities of writing be taught with it--or at least alluded to?

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[1]George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" in Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, eds., The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), IV, 127-140. Richard A. Lanham, Style: An Anti-Textbook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). See esp. Chapter One, "The Prose Problem and 'The Books'." My text for "Politics" is the "standard" edition, but I have omitted page references thoughout since the entire text is relatively brief and most who wish to refer to it will doubtless look to one of the many reprints.

[2]Orwell's lifelong relationship with politics is brilliantly explored in Alex Zwerdling, Orwell and the Left (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

[3]"Why I Write," In Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, I, 1-10.

[4]Lanham, p. 20.

TEACHING THE BASICS OF LANGUAGE: STRUCTURING THE SUPPLEMENTARY WRITING LAB

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Like snowflakes and fingerprints every writing lab shares generic similarities with all other writing labs, yet remains unique. Each lab is shaped by the needs of its own composition program, and by the linguistic capability of the students who use it, and as a lab is planned each director must solve essentially similar problems in his own way, despite all the well-meaning suggestions and examples of other labs. Knwoing this, I still intend to describe our lab at Purdue, proceeding on the theory that it is useful to provide a backboard for others against which they can bounce their own ideas.

What I will offer, for those who have the responsibility of starting up a lab or are foraging for improvements in an existing one, is an example of the structure of one supplementary lab. The various parts of the whole can be altered, rejected, or copied at will. What I will deal with are our solutions to the general concerns of most labs--physical facilities, record keeping, instructional approaches and materials, and evaluation. The basic structure of our lab, pulled together during the doldrums of a summer semester, was not entirely complete by the time the next fall semester began. However, we found that we were able to open our doors and begin helping students somewhere during the later stages of construction. Finishing touches and alterations, we discovered, are best left for later, after the trial run.

One of the first requisites of a lab is an adequate physical facility. Acquiring a well-lit, easily accessible room large enough to seat the number of students we estimated we'd be working with at any given hour was only the first task. Then we had the less tangible problem of considering how we could turn that "facility" into a cheery, informal, friendly room. Wrestling with this was more difficult than deciding where to put the chairs and tables, but it is also more important. Students who come to a supplementary lab usually enter rather hesitantly. They may feel inadequate, threatened, even hostile. Since a supplementary lab serves students who have been referred there for additional instruction by their composition teachers, they may also resent the extra time being added to their already busy schedules. An efficient-looking, impersonal place done in "motel modern" doesn't help to allay these kinds of fears. Posters, plants, donated art work of students, ashtrays, baskets of pretzels, the sound of voices, and a friendly receptionist parked near the entrance help to humanize the lab, to make it less like still another classroom. In the case of our lab, we also achieved, accidentally, an air of deshabille by acquiring, along with our conference tables and file cabinets, some cast off dining room furniture from a friendly dean. From a source no one quite remembers we also acquired a few dilapidated sofas. The result has been tagged "early Salvation Army."

Given a room with a large open area and some small cubicles (with desks) along one wall, we also had to think about how to create a mixture of spaces for tutoring, for individual work, and for small group conferences. Most of the cubicles are used for tutorials, except for the small one which has wall-to-wall sofas. There are times, we find, that the lab instructor and student need to meet not over a desk but in a conversational side-by-side arrangement. In the large open area private islands were created by putting two shoulder height bookcases at right angles to each other, with a desk tucked in behind. A free standing blackboard and table-top acoustical dividers create other partitions for students who need to work quietly on their own.

Another concern of a lab is to clarify any limitations on its program. In our lab this means that we must keep reminding ourselves that the students we see are also enrolled in composition classes where they are expected to keep up with assignments. We don't, therefore, expect students to do extensive writing in the lab or to take home

lengthy lab exercises. (Our preference for and belief in quick feedback would preclude this anyway.) We also tend to focus on instruction in grammar and mechanics. Rhetorical concerns such as style, tone, and organization, which can be treated in a variety of ways with an equal variety of emphases in the classrooms are, we feel, best left for the classroom teacher. If a lab instructor mingles in, he might muddy the waters and confuse the student. For the same reason we try not to work with individual papers that students are preparing for classes, except when it is necessary to refer in a general way to the student's writing to discuss ways in which material might be organized more effectively, topic sentences clarified, and so on. Mainly, we work with specific areas of grammar and mechanics which have been isolated as evident weaknesses in the student's writing skills. Each student has an individualized plan of study to work on, and when he finishes his study plan he has finished his lab work. Thus, we have students moving in and out of the lab all semester. We do lose some students who cease to show up for appointments, but our lack of rigid exit requirements has its benefits. Because our lab instructors do not have to make any formal judgments of the student's performance (either in terms of grades or completed requirements), we are only and entirely a helping place. We find that this breeds an atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

Because our lab staff of six instructors (five graduate students and a director) assists approximately 250 students per semester, we had to develop a record-keeping system which would help us keep track of each student's work. Our system will probably seem overly elaborate and time-consuming for those who dislike filling out forms--a propensity we share. But we do manage, somehow, to keep our records. The form we use initially for diagnostic purposes is a lengthy check-list of all the specific units of study we offer in the lab, including an all-purpose "other" at the bottom to catch up unusual or omitted items. Before a student comes in for his first appointment, he is asked to leave a writing sample of at least 300-400 words. As the lab instructor looks over this writing in preparation for the first appointment, the instructor checks on the category sheet each occurrence of an error or an evident general weakness. Using this and any recommendations sent along by the composition teacher, the lab instructor then draws up a study plan for the student's lab work. At their first meeting, the lab instructor and the student look over the study plan to see what they will be working on in the weeks to come; and as the student progresses through the various phases, his progress is noted on the study plan sheet. Both the student and the lab instructor thus have an easy way of surveying where they are, what has been accomplished, and what lies ahead. We have still a third record-keeping sheet because we find that we also need to keep a running account of each session with the student. After each appointment, the instructor records briefly what was done that day--what materials were used, where the student had to leave off in order to hurry on to a class, what needs further attention or review, etc. When the student comes to the lab the next time, a brief glance at these entries lets us pick up fairly close to the point where we left off last time.

Our file drawer of record-keeping forms also has other sheets with which we keep in touch with the composition class teacher. We have an assortment of these slips, and their use is obvious: notices that students have begun lab work, notices that they have missed appointments, and notices of monthly progress. Our composition staff numbers well over 125, and we need to keep in touch. When we cannot find the instructor for a brief chat or when we are too rushed to write a personal note, we resort to these forms.

When students begin their lab study, they work on small, well-defined units one at a time until each is mastered. Each unit proceeds in three stages: explanation, exercises, and writing practice. As the instructor works through an explanation of a rule, he is constantly checking to see that the student is comfortably familiar with the terms of the

principle being discussed (e.g., an understanding of the punctuation of compound sentences requires the prerequisite recognition of the compound sentence). When the student has a good theoretical grasp of the principle, he is given a handout that we developed for that particular point of usage or rule of grammar. We suggest to the students that they keep these handouts in their notebooks for future reference. Students seem to appreciate having something in their hands that they can carry home. The student then progresses to some exercise sheets, proceeding through as many as are necessary to help him acquire that principle. If we feel that it is needed, supplementary reading or some self instruction packets are also added here. When the student shows mastery at the recognition and habit building stage, he is ready to try transferring his knowledge to his own writing; i.e., he is ready for a writing practice sheet in which he composes a paragraph or two (or at least ten sentences) in which he consciously applies the rule he has been studying. When this is completed satisfactorily, the student is ready to proceed to the next unit on his study plan.

For those who are wondering how much of an investment in time this kind of materials preparation represents, the answer is that it is minimal. The cost is equally small if a department copier such as a ditto or stencil machine is available. For each handout we gleaned through several textbooks and boiled down what was needed to the fewest possible rules or explanations. Since these sheets are intended only as reviews or reminders, we did not attempt exhaustive treatments of each unit, and we keep each handout workably short: three ways to punctuate the compound sentence; a few varieties of parallel structure; a list of regular verb endings; a separate list of the most often used irregular verbs; another sheet of regular past participles. For the exercises we again browsed through standard textbooks, adapting the sentences we found there and checking to see that we had a representative variety. Later, after we had at least a semester's experience in tutorial work, we began to think about putting together some self-instruction packets. A financially well-endowed lab can also consider purchasing professionally prepared and printed self-instruction materials. But, I believe that before purchasing any packaged instructions material, a lab staff should gather some insights into the level of help needed by the students attending that particular lab and the type of approaches which generally seem effective with that student body. I have heard of some costly mistakes which resulted when a priori judgments for purchases were based on enticing advertising blurbs or some other lab staff's suggestions.

The only recurring costs for the lab I am describing are the salaries for the lab staff. I know that some labs successfully use paraprofessionals from the community or undergrad tutors. Our lab, as I have mentioned, is staffed mainly by graduate student instructors who are experienced in teaching composition. They agree that after having worked in tutorials with students, they can return to the classroom as better teachers. They also have an additional marketable skill when they begin job hunting.

Another important concern of our writing lab, the evaluation of our effectiveness, is left to the classroom instructors and students. At the end of each semester we send out evaluation questionnaires to all the students who have worked in the lab that semester and separate questionnaires to their instructors. Using a scale of one to five, the students rate the clarity and effectiveness of the lab instruction, the progress they feel they have made with their writing, their grade improvement, and the helpfulness and competency of their lab instructors. The composition teacher is given a somewhat different, but also brief, set of questions to answer. Again, using a scale of one to five, the instructor evaluates each student's subject mastery, grade improvement, attitude toward the lab, self image, and motivation.

In addition, we also ask students to evaluate each lab session before they leave. On a very short form which usually takes less than a minute or two to fill out, the student is asked to circle the appropriate numbers on a scale of one to five for three items. The first

question asks the student to what extent he already knew the material covered that day. This is useful information since it gives us clues as to whether or not we are covering familiar territory; it also provides an insight into the student's perception of his writing skills in this area. In addition, students are asked whether that day's instruction was interesting and whether it was clear. Further comments can be added at the bottom. Students take this form seriously, and they will occasionally record at the bottom of the sheet feelings they were hesitant to verbalize to the instructor. "Sometimes you sound like you're talking down to me," or "The sentences on the last exercise sheet were confusing." We regard these responses with equal seriousness, and we use them to revise materials and to try to stamp out incipient brushfires. Sometimes a quiet, seemingly unresponsive student will pen a note of heartfelt appreciation. Instructors need feedback and reinforcement too.

One final concern, of great importance to our supplementary writing lab, is publicity. Both students and composition instructors need to be aware of our facility if it is to be used fully. At the beginning of each semester we send announcements to each member of the composition staff. We distribute wallet cards or information sheets to all the students, and early in the semester we visit as many classrooms as we can to remind students where we are and what help we can offer. Another set of reminders go out to the staff mid-way through the semester. Articles in the campus newspaper also help to remind students of our existence.

What I have described here are only the specifics of one writing lab. I have tried to avoid sweeping generalizations on the nature of writing labs first, because I am not familiar with enough labs to be capable of offering such an overview and second, because I rather tend to agree with that excellent Renaissance schoolmaster Roger Ascham, who passed along the following pedagogical tactic: "One example is more valuable. . .than twenty precepts written in books."

THE SHEER EDGE OF MEANING: TEACHING COMPOSITION TO NATIVE AMERICANS

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> . . . of the ominous unknown he asks only
> the utterance of a name, only the most
> nominal sign that he has been understood,
> that his words are returned to him on the
> sheer edge of meaning. N. Scott Momaday

In the lemming-like rush to institute ethnic studies programs in the late sixties, remedial English teachers were faced with the problem of how to teach standard written English to minority students while at the same time encouraging them to preserve their own oral dialects. A variety of solutions were arrived at, and they met with varying degrees of success (see Sabina Johnson, "Remedial English: The Anglo-Centric Albatross?" College English, March, 1972). But now that the dust has cleared, we should all be a little embarrassed. Hundreds of articles on black dialect, perhaps as many on the idiom problems of Asian-Americans and the tense problems of Chicanos--but only a few half-hearted references to the special composition problems of Native American students.

Why this sin of omission? Two reasons present themselves: Native American students make up a relatively small percentage of the students on most campuses, and the problems of these students do not always seem to resolve themselves easily into difficulties with verb tense, or noun-pronoun agreement, or even particular dialectical idiosyncracies. In short, the problems of those few Native American students who are admitted to universities are too obscure for the majority of teachers to deal with effectively. As a result, they are treated as regular (or slower?) members of standard remedial composition courses.

The following article recounts my experiences with Native American students in Subject A (remedial composition) at the University of California, Berkeley. I will isolate and analyse the particular problems these students have in English composition, examine some possible sources of these problems,and discuss some methods that have met with success in dealing with these problems. These students are not necessarily a representative sample--since the University of California has fairly rigid entrance requirements, the number of students I deal with is small, and the quality of the students has increased dramatically over the past three years. The students do, however, come from a wide variety of backgrounds; some have come directly from reservations, some from inner-city ghettos, and a few from middle-class city and suburban families.

I. Background

Any English teacher dealing with Native American students would do well to review the works of Sapir and Whorf: their classic studies of American Indian languages give us valuable insights into the problems Indian students have in dealing with English. In his essay "Language and Logic," Benjamin Whorf says:

> Languages differ not only in how they build their sentences
> but also in how they break down nature to secure the elements
> to put in those sentences. . . . Thus English and similar tongues
> lead us to think of the universe as a collection of rather distinct
> objects and events corresponding to words. . . . The Indo-European
> languages and many others give great prominence to a type of sentence
> having two parts, each built around a class of word--substantives and
> verbs--which those languages treat differently in grammar. . . . Our
> Indian languages show that with a suitable grammar we may have intelligent

> sentences that cannot be broken down into subjects and predicates. . . . When we come to Nootka, [a tribe from the northwest coast of the United States] the sentence without subject or predicate is the only type.[1]

Many, if not the majority, of Native American students at Berkeley were not brought up speaking their hereditary language--a fact which should not lessen our attention to Sapir and Whorf. Whether their theory of the relationship between language and culture is valid is finally not important. What we learn from them, and what we must remember, is that there are widely different languages, and widely different world views which are reflected in those languages. Language changes or disappears faster than the view of the cosmos associated with it, and most young Native Americans have been brought up in a culture strongly influenced by a language they may have heard spoken only by old people. Yet they speak English at school and, frequently, at home. As a result, they are asked to perform an impossible task: to deal with the world in the particular way which their culture demands and which they themselves usually desire, but to refer verbally to this cosmological structure with a language which--superficially at least--implies a different world view.

If this is true, then English teachers must approach the grammatical and structural errors of Native American students differently then they do those of Blacks, or Chicanos. Often, the problems of these students simply reflect an incomplete mastery of standard written English, resulting from superficial preparation in secondary schools. In discussing his high school English class, one of my students wrote the following:

> The students that were on the bottom, or couldn't catch the meaning of the whole course were supplimented with their favorite issue of Conan Comix. They read this book in the corner, in hopes that they would not bother the rest of the class.

But even when the students have mastered the material in workbook-like fashion, they often still must struggle with a deeper problem--how to fit all these grammatical and structural elements into the pattern of logic peculiar to English, but often alien to the way they have been accustomed to view the world.

II. Error Profile

In 1969, Constance Brown Kuriyama, an Associate in Subject A, developed an error profile based on her analysis of a large number of writing exams given in our department at Berkeley. The profile consists of fourteen errors which, when they occur in significant numbers in student papers, indicate an inadequate command of the grammar and syntax of standard written English. While the profile is not a perfect tool, it has proved highly useful in our department. Using this profile as my guide, I tabulated the errors made by twelve of the Native American students enrolled in my Subject A sections over the past three years, and those made by a random sample of other Subject A students from the same period. The random sample, quite incidentally, included Whites, Orientals, and Chicanos. The results of these tabulations are significant.

A. Reference The twelve Native American students made a total of 21 reference errors, while the random sample revealed only 8 errors in this category. The nature of the reference errors made by both groups of students was the same: they consisted of phrases in which "this," "that," and "it" referred to whole ideas which sometimes ran on for several

sentences; of "they," "them," and "these" with two or more possible references; and of the generally vague "it" that crops up in most freshman writing. The greater number of reference errors made by Indian students at first surprised me, since I do not find as we progress in the quarter that reference presents any extraordinary problems for them.

In fact, the greater number of reference errors should not come as a surprise. Native Americans, much more than other students with whom we deal, are unfamiliar with the differences between oral and written language. They have been brought up in a culture in which communication is traditionally oral, not written. Indeed, until Sequoia developed a Cherokee alphabet in the nineteenth century, no North American Indian language had a written form. Native Americans speak, they do not write, and the writing these students have done in their previous schooling is perfunctory at best. In speaking, with its concomitant gesturing and voice modulation, reference does not often present much of a problem. In addition, pronouns per se are not a universal constituent of language, and not all American Indian languages make use of pronouns. Pronoun indicators are often prefixed to verbs or to nouns: in Navaho, "it" disappears completely. The following, from a study of the Chichimeca-Jonaz language, may help to clarify the situation. Here are the words for "aunt" in that language:

	singular	plural
first person	natu (my aunt)	natuun (aunt of us three or more)
second person	utu (your aunt)	utun (aunt of you three. . .)
third person	eru (his aunt)	butun (aunt of those three. . .)

> A glance at the native terms above is enough to reveal that pronouns are combined with nouns and that the form for "aunt" changed with each person. . . . In the Chichimeca-Jonaz language it is impossible to express an unpossessed or unrelated noun concept. There is no way of saying "aunt" without saying whose aunt it is. Likewise, there is no way of saying "earth," "air," or "water" without indicating personal relation or possession.[2]

We see, then, that Native American students' difficulties with reference stem from two sources: simple unfamiliarity with written English, and a linguistic heritage that does not treat pronouns as English does. Nonetheless, the correcting of reference errors does not present problems for these students, once they are familiar with the variety of pronouns and their uses.

B. Modification In our system at Berkeley, the term "modification" covers a wide range of errors: for the purpose of diagnosing problems in composition, we lump dangling, misplaced, squinting, and incorrect modifiers into one category. Of the papers examined, the Native American students made 23 errors, while the students in the random sample made 27, a figure that is only negligibly higher. Since Native American students generally produce simple "down-hill" sentences (subject-verb-complement) on their diagnostic exams, they almost always misuse modifying phrases when they occasionally attempt more complex structures. The random sample, however, indicates that most other students rely on a hit-and-miss method: they usually write a fair number of complex sentences, some of which contain proper modifications and some of which don't. The figures, then, indicate a higher number of errors per attempt at modification for the Native American students than for the random sample. This finding goes hand-in-hand with the following category.

C. Run-together Sentences, Faulty Coordination, And Faulty Subordination

The students in both samples made about the same number of errors in coordinating independent clauses and in creating run-together sentences. The Native American students made significantly fewer errors in subordination. Again, these figures can be attributed to the fact that Native American students do not attempt the more complex sentence structures which result in these problems. This reliance on simple sentence structures reveals a self-consciousness on the part of Native American students as far as their writing ability is concerned: they tend to write conservatively on the diagnostic exam, sticking to the structures they feel most comfortable with (and those they were perhaps encouraged to stick to by their high school teachers), stopping with one subject and verb, and perhaps an object, and not worrying about the transitional felicities more fluent writers depend on.

Breaking the simple sentence mold is somewhat more difficult than correcting reference errors. First, writing almost exclusively in simple sentences leads a student to make frequent logical errors because he is prohibited by the structure from making appropriate connections between sentences. This basic problem in exposition is particularly difficult for Native American students to deal with because spoken English doesn't depend as much on these subtleties as does written English. Second, no student likes to see his paper marked up beyond recognition, so he would rather stick to the structures in which he makes few errors than experiment with new forms, the purpose of which is not always clear to him. In the classroom I stress that the writer has a responsibility to his audience (for one thing, not to bore them), that everything that one says in a paper does not carry equal weight--some ideas are necessarily subordinate to others--and that in writing, unlike speaking, one must assume that the audience will consist of more than one person. To help them keep their audience in mind, I frequently mimeograph and distribute student papers to the class; if a paper is filled with simple sentences, some student (who may in fact write the same way himself) will invariably comment on how boring or even childish the paper seems.

But students cannot exist on errors alone; they need to see and examine samples of good writing, of good coordination and subordination. I have used the following passage from "The Man Made of Words," an essay by N. Scott Momaday, with much success:

> It is significant that the story of the arrowmaker returns in a special way upon itself. It is about language, after all, and it is therefore part and parcel of its own subject; virtually, there is no difference between the telling and that which is told. The point of the story lies, not so much in what the arrowmaker does, but in what he says--and indeed <u>that</u> he says it. The principal fact is that he speaks, and in so doing he places his very life in the balance. It is this aspect of the story which interests me most, for it is here that the language becomes most conscious of itself; we are close to the object and origin of literature. (New York Times Book Review, May 4, 1969)

To most students, the passage at first seems hopelessly complex and obscure, but as a group we do a close analysis of it, paying special attention to the structure of the sentence. The students not only see for themselves how compound and complex sentences can work, but they also see that they are capable of reading difficult passages with understanding. The passage serves other purposes as well. Our course at Berkeley consists not only of practice in composition, but also of an analytical introduction to language: we study the nature and history of languages, English dialects, animal communication, political rhetoric, and so on; the essay "The Man Made of Words" fits into this structure very well. In addition, the fact that Professor Momaday is a Kiowa Indian causes some of my students to put out more

than their usual effort in attempting to understand the essay; they are frequently rewarded with insights into language which are based on the heritage they share with the writer.

Explaining the mechanics and logic of subordination to some Native American students often requires time outside regular classes. On a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, we can read sentences out loud, discuss what they mean, what the students want them to mean, and how they can go about creating more effective sentences. The process takes time, and even after the untrained or insecure students have become familiar with words such as "therefore" and "however," they misuse them because these words are part of a logical system that is still alien to them.

D. Sentence Fragments The Native American students created three times as many sentence fragments as did those students from the random sample (18 as opposed to 6). This is perhaps the stickiest problem that Native American students have to deal with. The fragments are often syntactical units that in fact work quite well by themselves, but because they violate conventional English sentence structure, we say that their appearance in freshman papers reveals an incomplete mastery of English grammar--while we turn around and praise them when they appear in the works of more accomplished writers. The following sentence (and fragment) occurs in a discussion of an article comparing the intelligence of man and porpoises: "When man comes into contact with something he cannot fit into a category; he tries to harness it. For instance, the piece about man and the porpoise." Our understanding of the student's meaning is not perfect, yet the point has been made. We understand that he is making a general statement and relating it, however vaguely, to the particular instance under discussion. But because he has written a sentence fragment (and provided some odd punctuation), we note an error, perhaps review with him the necessary elements of a sentence, and leave it at that. This will work for most students, perhaps, but Native American students often need more background. They are better able to deal with these problems if they understand why it is they write in so many fragments.

There are three reasons for this tendency in the writing of Native American students. First, as with reference errors, we often speak in fragments, omitting subjects or verbs, making modifying phrases and subordinate clauses stand by themselves--and these students, whose major connection with language is through the spoken word, have a difficult time making the transition from speaking to writing. Second, the fragments in part reflect unsureness with the verb "to be," a result, again, of inadequate training in grammar. The uses of "to be" will be discussed in the following section. The third reason for their difficulty with sentence fragments is that many American Indian languages do not predicate in what, from our Indo-European viewpoint, seems the logical way. Some Indian grammars do not require an actor--a subject; others can do without the action--the verb; and still others simply do not divide their "sentences" into subjects and verbs the way we do. The anthropologist Harold Driver explains:

> . . .English fails to distinguish consistently between the two classes on the continuum of experience. For example, "lightning," "wave," and "storm" are nouns, although they represent both temporary events and processes of change. In contrasts, "keep," "continue," and "dwell" are verbs, yet they describe long-lasting conditions or steady states. Therefore, English arbitrarily tosses many of its words into one category or the other without adherence to any logical scheme.
>
> The Hopi Indians do it better. They classify "lightning," "wave," "storm," and other things of short duration as verbs and consistently place experiences of longer duration and more steady character in a noun class. The Nootka, in contrast. . . do not make a basic distinction between nouns and verbs. They take a monistic view of the continuum of length of duration of experience. (Driver, p. 32)

Whether they speak them or not, many Native American students are held in the grip of these languages through the influence they continue to exert on their patterns of culture. If a student can be made to realize this, grasping the new logic required by the subject-verb-object pattern is infinitely easier--and in the process, the student learns something about the nature of language.

E. Predication In the particular terminology we use in Subject A, "predication" always involves a misuse of the verb "to be," for instance in the sentence "Despair is when you are alone," or the sentence "Porpoises are an example of animal communication." As linguists point out, it is unfortunate that in English we have four quite distinct verbs, all of which are spelled the same and labeled "to be." With this in mind, I was quite surprised to discover in the correlations of errors that the students in the random sample made 13 errors in this category while the Native American students made only five. On re-examining the papers from the latter group, I discovered that "to be" was used only in the simplest and most direct statements, such as "It is a big game," or "Advertising is propaganda," or it was used as an auxiliary ("Everyone is playing a game of some kind."). Again this reflects their basically conservative approach to writing; they use "to be" when it is used as the grammatical equals sign, or when it indicates a certain tense, but avoid it in those situations in which they are unsure of its usage. In Hopi, "to be" would undoubtedly be a noun, and I suspect that some Native American students avoid predication errors in their complicated sentences by switching to more active verbs. Of course, the other way to avoid predication errors is to create sentence fragments: for instance, one student from the random sample might say, "The porpoise is an example of animal communication." But perhaps a Native American student would say "Animal communication has many forms. For example, The porpoise." The first statement clearly contains a predication error; the porpoise is not an example of communication, but is rather an example of an animal that communicates. The student has failed to see that his sentence is illogical. By the same token, the fragment in the second statement has an implied predication which is identical to the first because, if we rewrite the statement to eliminate the fragment, we come up with the first statement. Superficially, then, the student has avoided misusing "to be" by creating a sentence fragment, but that fragment itself reveals a misunderstanding about the use of the verb. The logic of "to be" is often baffling to students in general, and in dealing with Native American students, we must remember that this logic is peculiar to English, and is not a universal phenomenon.

However, the cultural heritage of these students, which so often works against them because of our lack of understanding, can be made to help them overcome predication problems. The following selection is the surrender speech of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians:

> Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. The old men are all killed. It is the young men who say yes or no. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.

After we read this piece aloud in class, I ask the students to discuss the effect Chief Joseph's use of "to be" has on the reader or listener, and we look at the various ways in which he uses that verb. As a homework assignment, I ask them to paraphrase the speech: that is, to keep essentially the same sentence structures--and especially the forms of "to be"--but to substitute their own setting and ideas in place of Chief Joseph's. A typical paraphrase might begin like this: "The students are gone. The Chancellor is powerless. The elderly professors are all out of work. It is the teaching assistants who give assignments. . .," and so on. This exercise has met with much success in giving the students confidence in their ability to write forceful prose. It also provides a useful

counterpoint to the style of Professor Momaday, because it demonstrates what can be accomplished with the intelligent use of simple sentence structures.

F. Grammar Under the general rubric of "grammar" we include such varied items as errors in pronoun case, incorrect verb forms, adjectives used for adverbs, and mistakes in possessive forms. The Native American students made 18 errors in this category, while the students in the random sample made slightly less than half as many (8). Again, the reasons for these errors are the same as those which are responsible for so many of the problems of Native American students face. These errors are, first and foremost, typical results of inadequate instruction in earlier grades, and they confound many students--Whites, Chicanos, Blacks, and Asians, as well as Native Americans. As with other errors, the grammar errors which result from this poor preparation are compounded by cultural differences. Possession, in some languages, depends on the context, not on punctuation or spelling changes. And verb forms are a problem area unto themselves, related to, but distinct from, problems with predication or sentence fragments. The Hopi language is a classic example of an alien tense system:

> Although the Hopi carefully distinguish nouns and verbs, their verbs have no tense--no past, present, or future. Instead, their verbs are distinguished according to aspects, validity forms, and clause-linkage forms. Aspect refers to the relative length of time an event lasts. . . . Clause-linkage forms relate the temporal characteristics of two or more verbs; they indicate which action is earlier, later, or going on simultaneously with respect to another one or more verbs. (Driver, p. 32)

Native American students, like those from other backgrounds, respond well to memorization of and drilling on these grammatical points. But because they tend to be over-conservative in their writing, I make a special effort to encourage them to experiment with their developing grammatical skills when they write essays; the hit and miss method is effective, and familiarity ultimately breeds confidence.

G. Use Of Examples And Illustrations This is not an area covered in our error profile, but it is worth mentioning at this point. The Native American students I have encountered consistently use excellent examples and vivid illustrations, and they are far superior to other students in this ability. When asked to write an argumentative paper on any topic that interested her, one of my students wrote an extended analogy comparing Native Americans and the American legal system to Navaho boys learning how to break horses. She developed the analogy with intelligence and stylistic sophistication. The following is from a paper in which another student is writing an extended definition of the word "ignorant":

> Or Judge Hanging Mary asks a young girl (Mary being a judge like Judge Roy Bean) who is accusing some one of rape, "Where did he do it to you my girl?" and the girl points between her legs. Hanging Mary meant, where did it take place. I think she knew it happened between the girls legs. If not she was a pretty dumb Judge. Anyway, she made an ignorant comment.

The stylistic naivete is painfully obvious, yet we are left, in spite of it, with a vivid image and a clear understanding of the student's interpretation of "ignorant." I believe that Native American students handle this area of writing well, not only because they often have had more intense and varied experiences with the world at large than other students, and are able to call up these experiences when they need to illustrate a point, but more importantly because their oral tradition depends so much on example, analogy, and illustration.

Conclusions These, then, are the errors and successes that occur most often in the papers of the Native American students who have passed through remedial English at UC Berkeley. On our error tally sheets, we leave a space for the marker to comment on aspects of the essay that aren't revealed in a simple enumeration of errors. In examining the comments, I found

that seven out of the twelve exams from Native American students carried notations such as the following: "some basic faults in language reasoning," "thoughtful, but nothing coheres," and "logic sometimes unclear." In the random sample, on the other hand, I found only two papers which carried notations at all similar to these, and they were "lack of clarity," and "conclusion founders in repetition and incoherency."

If we review the above analysis of errors and their possible sources, we can see that the markers' comments are apt indeed, for we can see that logic is the thread that ties all of the errors together in the case of Native American students. These students often fail to make logical transitions between paragraphs and between sentences (when one writes in extremely simple sentences, it is virtually impossible to make these transitions), and they fail within these larger units because they often fail within the basic unit--the sentence itself. This is not because they have not paid attention to their grammar in their previous schooling (although they may not have), nor is it entirely the fault of teachers in earlier grades, but it is because they are asked to deal with the most structured and stylized form of communication--writing--in a way that is often alien to the way in which they have been taught to view the world and the relationships of things (objects and actions) in that world.

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Footnotes

1. Whorf, Benjamin Lee, Language, Thought, and Reality. ed. John B. Carroll. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1956, p. 241.

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LANGUAGE: THE LISTENING IMPERATIVE

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In the language arts listening is the most neglected area. English teachers teach the skills of reading, writing and speaking in a direct fashion on a daily basis throughout the school year. In this paper a brief exploration of the historical aspects of listening, the relationship between speaking and listening, and the nature of attentive listening is offered for your consideration.

HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF LISTENING

As a tool of education, listening is of recent emphasis, but the impact of listening on all learning is as old as man himself. The prophet Jeremiah (5:21) laments that his people "have ears but hear not." But listening can make the difference between knowledge and ignorance, information and misinformation, enjoyment and boredom.

Once communication was almost entirely by word of mouth. Long before man expressed his thoughts in picture, ideogram, and writing, he communicated orally. Some of our greatest teachers--Homer, Socrates, Christ, and Mohammed--used speech and listening more extensively and more effectively in their teaching than they used writing and reading. Great epics such as the Odyssey and the Song of Roland were related through the spoken word and retentive memories were alerted through attentive listening.

Chaucer wrote his narrative poems to be read aloud and used a style of literature that adapted to a speaker-audience situation. In the early university period, master teachers became famous through their lecturing and listening was the only feasible method for disseminating their learning.

With the invention of printing nearly four centuries ago, listening slowly gave way to reading as a medium of education. For more than three centuries thereafter the world became increasingly print-minded; the major method of learning was visual. For generations, therefore, literacy has been measured in terms of reading, not listening. But listening is a major way of learning and the most frequent language activity of people.

In less than forty years, the telephone, radio, films, sound recorders, and television have returned the ear to its former place of importance. Oral communication is rapidly rising to the level of written communication as a medium for learning. Schools which for three or four centuries have based instruction on the reading of the printed word, are turning to visual and listening avenues of learning to strengthen and supplement the educational experiences.

RESEARCH IN LISTENING

Listening, in the past, was assumed to be like reading. While thousands have studied the reading process, few have paid attention to this comparable assimilative skill. In recent years, however, researchers have awakened an interest in listening, and we have begun to give it its rightful place in the school curriculum.

Studies by Rankin (9) and Wilt (11) have helped us to realize the importance of listening as a communication skill in daily life and as a tool for learning in the classroom. Nichols (6) analyzed the factors in listening and set up a successful instructional program for teaching college freshmen. Brown's (1) study resulted in the first published test of listening comprehension. Lewis (3,4) studied the effect of listening upon reading and con-

structed tests to measure the listening ability of intermediate-grade children. Pratt (8) and Marsden (5) evaluated the effectiveness of instructions in listening. These and other studies have opened the door for further development of methods and techniques for teaching listening.

Listening is the process of attaching meaning to the spoken word. It is a complex process involving much more than the physical act of hearing or the external attitude of paying attention. Like reading, it is an assimilative communication skill which includes the understanding and interpreting of symbols and requires the development of certain skills and attitudes. It is unlike reading in that the listener has but one opportunity to comprehend, whereas, in reading, he may reread that which he does not understand.

The development of listening skill begins in the cradle as the newborn child uses his most highly developed organs, his ears, to attach the meaning to the many sounds in his environment. In the process of learning to communicate, much energy is expended in imitating those sounds.

It is through this interaction with his environment that the preschool child acquires his listening and speaking vocabularies. Early studies estimated the size of these vocabularies to be relatively small. However, a more recent study by Smith (10) found that first-grade children had an average listening vocabulary of 3,700 words (16,900 basic words and 6,800 derived words) with a range from 6,000 to 48,000 words. From these and other facts, we must assume that children enter school with considerable listening skill.

Research has shown that children continued to show improvement in listening until about the end of the sixth grade. Then, as they achieve a fair degree of proficiency in reading, they cease to improve in listening.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

In the classroom environment listening is often a one-way process while in social relationships each person has the chance to listen and speak alternately. The listener who really listens tries to see the problem the way the speaker sees it. He has a feeling of empathy and is experiencing with the speaker.

Physical movements have an important role in listening. Gestures and facial expressions are important in interpreting the words of a speaker. They let the listener know if the speaker is happy or sad, angry or pleased, ambitious or lazy, confident or shy, informed or uninformed.

Listening may be regarded as a dynamic process in the communication act. In listening to a speaker, the material heard may be modified and evaluated at several stages through an interpretation of the word symbols and response. The listener then is able to arrange ideas from the central theme, to the main points, and down to the details. Often new ideas are added as the listener recapitulates what he has heard.

Listening to a speaker may be difficult and fatiguing because it requires continuous, active mental effort. An individual's ego and nervous system are affected by the incoming messages from the speaker or speakers, and he in turn is sending messages back to the speaker. Listening is the other half of talking and if people stop listening, it is useless to talk. Confusion, misinformation, and misunderstanding are the products of poor listening.

Both children and adults fake attention to a speaker. This may take a form of daydreaming. Then there is the student who hears but fails to comprehend. He may say, "I heard you but I don't know what you said." This may be due to inadequate concepts or vocabulary, or to a meager experience background. The teacher can use more than one way to explain what he/she means and follows the verbal explanation with objects, pictures, or actions to give the words a concrete base.

Poor listening may have a physical, psychological or pedagogical basis. Among the physical causes are: hearing loss, short attention span, and general fatigue (the student is tired and hungry). Psychological causes may include:

1. Feelings of insecurity - tension and worry make it difficult to concentrate.
2. Retreating into his own world because of a poor self-concept.
3. Understimulation - the student has had little opportunity to talk at home and seldom does anyone listen to him.
4. Overstimulation - the student has been in a situation with much noise and confusion of radio, television, boisterous older siblings, and quite vocal adults.

Perhaps the most important pedagogical factors are lack of experience and practice, but an environment and readiness for listening established by teacher and students are necessary motivators. Students do not listen when they are not involved. They are inattentive to a discussion which does not affect them--either in its personal implications or in terms of opportunities to contribute. Students do not listen when they see no reason for listening.

ATTENTIVE LISTENING

Attentive listening can be obtained through the use of imaginative teaching, student involvement, readiness for listening, and frequent changes of pace.

Purposeful, accurate listening demands both motive and consciousness of purpose. Attentive listening is needed in situations in which accuracy of comprehension is involved, as in directions, questions, announcements, and introductions. Accurate listening is necessary to follow the thread of discussion to be able to repeat exactly or to summarize what has been said.

The good listener starts to listen on the first sentence since he knows that speakers often state their central idea in the first sentence or at best among the first few sentences. The sooner the listener discovers where the speaker is going and how he is proceeding to arrive at the basic points, the better able the listener is to follow the discourse. After he identifies the main idea he listens to supporting statements or details. He examines each to determine whether they are illustrative, essential, or irrelevant to the topic.

The habit of concentrating on what a speaker is saying is not easily acquired. Establishing a purpose for listening will tend to marshall one's thoughts to the matter at hand. The good listener anticipates the next point, identifies supporting material, and recapitulates the main ideas given. In selecting ideas to be retained one must take fifty to one hundred of a speaker's words and summarize them into five or ten to serve the purpose of the listener. Without this process of translation one may become lost in the details of the topic and fail to grasp the whole or general idea.

Systemic training in carrying out directions early in the school year ensures accurate, purposeful listening. There are two prerequisites for using directions: full attention of the student and expectation of completion of the activity or action. To prevent failure, accustom students to attentive listening and thoughtful interpretation. Before attempting to give directions the teacher must first gain the student's individual attention and then state what the student is to do clearly and concisely.

The habit of courteous listening is one that will prove invaluable to students throughout their school life and in all the years that follow. Good conversation and constructive discussion depend upon the individual's willingness to listen while others talk. Throughout

the school day the need for courteous listening is evident in group planning and discussions, class conversations, and audience situations.

The development of aesthetic appreciation is a longtime goal of those who work with students, despite other educators' shifting theories. Film and recordings of great plays and dramatic productions offer rich opportunities for development among educators that listening to good readers or actors leads to literary appreciation.

Poetry read or spoken aloud has a stronger effect than when it is read silently. If it is read well poetry takes on a freshness that surprises us in many unexpected ways. The human voice is an instrument and we can teach children to use their voices with melody, range, and variety. Appreciation of poetry can be enhanced by listening to the variations in tempo in poetry.

People differ in their ability to listen as they do in reading, writing, and speaking. Experience conditions the quality and quantity of listening. The student cannot get meaning or understanding by listening to ideas that are unrelated to his intellectual or cultural experience. The individual who brings the most experience to the listening situation takes the most away.

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AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH TO THE RULES OF SPEAKING

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As native speakers of English we have all learned to alter our speech to suit the occasion. We are constantly monitoring our speech to convey information in the most appropriate and effective way possible. Knowing what to say and not say, when to say it, and how to say it constitute what sociolinguists call the "rules of speaking." The intent of this paper is to propose a method for aiding foreign students in acquiring the rules of speaking.

Native speakers learn very early to vary their language to fit the situation. Ferguson (1973:39) points out that at a very early age, children may have "complex repertoires of different registers, different dialects or different languages which they use for different occasions." The acquisition of the rules of speaking, like the learning of the structure of the language, is a gradual process. However, Week (1971) in her study of speech registers in young children suggests that there may be greater variation in age in the acquisition of registers than in the acquisition of grammatical rules. One possible explanation for this difference is that the acquisition of registers is closely related to individual experience. A young child entering kindergarten may not be familiar with certain language uses of the classroom. The rules of "raising your hand," "one at a time," and "taking turns," are probably entirely new behaviors. What he learns and doesn't learn about when to speak and when not to speak will depend on his specific classroom experience.

If a native speaker acquires competence in the rules of speaking through experience, one might argue that we allow a non-native speaker to do the same. Competence in knowing when to use what variety of speech might be viewed as a function of experiences that occur outside the classroom. However, the foreign student, unlike the child, has already learned the rules of speaking in his native language. Since, to some extent, he is already aware of the social dimensions of language use, we should be able to use this knowledge in the classroom. Clearly the acquisition of the rules of speaking is an important goal of an ESL class since inappropriateness is as much of a marker of a non-native speaker as is a grammatical error. As Halliday (1968:150) points out, "the choice of items from the wrong register, and the mixing of items from different registers, are among the most frequent mistakes made by non-native speakers of the language."

If we agree that learning what and how to say something is an important dimension of second language learning, we are faced with the problem of how to teach it. Two particular activities have traditionally been suggested as successful methods in learning the social dimensions of language; namely, dialogues and role-playing. The use of dialogues is often advocated on the basis of their ability to teach language within a social context. Some dialogue textbooks even vary responses within the dialogue, as Finocchiaro (1970:xx) puts it, "to avoid the shock that language learners experience in speaking to native speakers when their stimulus sentence is not followed by the response they had been led to expect." Thus the question, "How are you?", might be answered with

I'm feeling good.
Not bad, thanks.
Fine.
O.K.
No response.

Such exercises have two advantages in developing awareness of the rules of speaking: first, the language is presented in a social context; and secondly, recognition is given to the variety of responses that are possible in a social situation. They do not, however, help the student to know when to select one form over the other. A native speaker who chooses not to respond to the question, "How are you?", might do so for a variety of reasons; perhaps,

he is anxious to proceed to another topic or he may not want to continue the encounter. In any case, he has selected the alternative of not responding for a particular purpose. (Very few dialogues in fact offer "no response" as an option, even though it is a typical one.) By presenting all of the responses simultaneously, we are giving the students the idea that all the alternatives are functional equivalents. The dialogue does little to aid a foreign student in understanding when and why a native speaker would respond to an inquiry one way on one occasion and another way on another occasion.

A second traditional technique for teaching the rules of speaking is role-playing. In this case, the teacher presents students with information about the social situation and asks the students to create an appropriate exchange. For example, students might be provided with the following information:

Student A: You have an extra ticket to the symphony. You enjoy the company of Student B and would like him to attend the symphony with you.

Student B: You do not enjoy going to the symphony. You would like to refuse the invitation without offending Student A.

While this approach does specify the social dimensions of the encounter, it has one serious disadvantage in developing competency in the rules of speaking. Language use differs greatly from one language community to the next: Applegate (1975) clearly illustrates cross cultural differences in the role of silence, conventions of politeness, and speaking volume and intonation. The conventions of refusing a social invitation may be very different between cultures, and a student who attempts to translate a refusal from his native language might produce something very inappropriate in English. Role-playing then does nothing to minimize the interference that might occur due to cultural differences in language use. It instead presupposes that the foreign student already knows what is English for a particular situation.

Bowen (1972:419) maintains that variation in language use "should be defined, extensively illustrated and taught as the major content of advanced language courses." However, the traditional techniques of dialogues and role-playing do not aid the advanced student in knowing when and why to select a particular linguistic item. Perhaps because so much of language use is out-of-awareness for native speakers, it is difficult to categorize and illustrate the rules. What we need is an effective method to help us and the foreign student develop an awareness of the rules of speaking in English. Let me suggest one approach to language use based on current work in sociolinguistics.

For the sociolinguist, language variation is posed as a question. Hymes (1968:109) in his description of the social dimensions of language states: "What I present is not a system to be imposed, but a series of questions to be asked. Hopefully the questions will get at the ingredients and from the ingredients to the structure of speaking in a group." Perhaps by posing language use as a question for exploration in an ESL class, the same goal can be reached. What I am suggesting is that we provide students with a context in which they can first observe and then generalize on some of the rules of speaking in English.

Halliday (1968) differentiates three dimensions by which language use may vary. First is the field of discourse or the manner in which the whole event influences what is said. The second dimension is the mode of discourse or the manner in which the channel of communication affects language use. Finally, there is the dimension of the style of discourse or the way in which the relationship among the participants affects the use of language. These three dimensions - setting, mode and participants - could be used with advanced students as a framework for exploring language variance in English. Observing the way language is used in a variety of situations would be central to such an approach. Initially, observations might be limited to lexical features since, as Halliday points out, these are the most obvious indices to differences in language use. While observations would occur mainly

outside of class, the classroom could be used as a forum for comparing observations and reaching generalizations. What follows are some suggestions for observing language use within the dimensions of setting, mode and participants. The central question for the advanced student would be: How does the event, the channel, and the participants affect what is said and how it is said.

SETTING

In this dimension, students might be asked to observe and record distinctive lexical features used in religious sermons, scientific lectures, radio news broadcasts or television automobile advertisements. We might predict that a religious sermon, just in items of address, would render such distinctive features as brethren, friends, my fellowman, etc.

MODE

In this dimension, observations should be designed to illustrate how the channel of communication influences language use. Students could be asked to compare the language used in a written set of instructions as opposed to an oral set of instructions; or to compare the language used in summarizing the news in a newspaper as opposed to the radio. Whereas both the newspaper and radio share similar goals in presenting the news, structural features, particularly in the use of telegraphic language, may prove to be very different between the two.

PARTICIPANTS

Finally, students could observe how the relationship among the participants of a conversation affect the use of language. Students, for example, could be asked to observe the differences in greetings between an adult with another adult as opposed to an adult with a child; or a supervisor with his employee as opposed to with his colleague. The greeting of a child might serve to illustrate how intonation patterns vary according to the participants involved.

In all the observations, the dimensions of the setting, mode and participants should be clearly defined to provide the students with a specific context in which to observe linguistic variance. It is to be hoped that such observations will develop an awareness of some of the rules of speaking in English. Certainly, the rules of speaking in any language are extremely complex; they cannot be neatly labeled and deductively presented.

But what we can do is foster an awareness that language use does vary in a systematic way within a speech community. By observing this variation, the foreign student may begin to know when to use what.

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A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

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Due to dissatisfaction with existing methods for teaching communications courses, we have attempted to design a program tailored to the needs and abilities of our students. The Navajo Community College student body is approximately eighty-five percent Navajo, and most of these students are Navajo-English bilinguals. Language dominance varys from dominance in Navajo with only limited English ability to dominance in English with little ability in Navajo. Most of these students would be identified as poor risks for college because of low scores on standardized tests of reading comprehension, and writing problems in such areas as sentence structure, agreement, pronouns, prepositions, and inflectional suffixes.

Previous attempts to teach standard English writing consisted of breaking down the writing task into numerous skills such as punctuation, pronouns, and the like, and then giving intensive workshops ranging from a week to a semester in each of these areas. This approach was deemed unsatisfactory because students might pass the workshop and continue making the same errors, or conversely, fail the workshop, but not make the errors in writing longer essays. Attempts at reading improvement were also broken down into skill areas, including phonic drills, vocabulary building and the like.

We felt that many of the problems students experienced in reading and writing stemmed as much or more from unfamiliarity with the cultural background of the material as from deficiencies in certain skills. The College Level Literacy Program (CLLP) which we are trying this semester (Fall, 1976) provides three alternatives in an attempt to meet students needs based on the above assessment.

One alternative is for the student to demonstrate his literacy in the Navajo language. Since this institution serves the Navajo community, proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking Navajo is deemed appropriate to fulfill college requirements for language ability. Navajo language proficiency would be much more appropriate than English for the student who wishes to specialize in any of the traditional Navajo subjects.

Many students may plan careers which involve interaction with both the English-speaking and Navajo-speaking communities. For these students, the language requirement may be fulfilled by electing communications courses from both Navajo and English. At least functional literacy in both languages is required for this option.

Another group of students are interested in getting an equivalent of two years of work at a "regular" college. These students may be preparing to transfer to a four-year institution off the reservation to complete the bachelor's degree or they may be planning the associate degree as a terminal degree to prepare them for jobs in the Anglo community. These students are advised to take the entire communications requirements in English courses as well.

Instead of the usual writing course in which the student studies how to write and sometimes even writes a little, we are attempting to teach our communications courses in conjunction with a content course which will fill one of the student's requirements for graduation. Instead of writing about topics arbitrarily assigned by the teacher to illustrate a particular type or style of writing, the students discuss, read and write about the content of the course. The rationale behind this approach is that the students will be motivated to do well in the communications meetings because working on the content of the course is more relevant to their daily concerns as students than the task of writing about subjects selected by the communications teacher. This rationale, of course, assumes that the students are motivated to absorb the material and do well in their content courses, and that this motivation will be carried over into their communications courses (Dean Brodsky, Lecture, University of New Mexico, Juen, 1976).

Procedure

This semester we are using Navajo History and Culture for the content course. This seemed a good choice as all students are required to complete six credits in the general area of Navajo and Indian Studies for graduation, and also seems consistent with the college's stated policy of integrating the Navajo ethos into all areas of the curriculum. A typical week's schedule looks something like this: On Monday all the communications sections meeting at a particular hour meet together to hear a lecture on the content area. This meeting includes at least one section of each level of communications course. For the rest of the week the students meet in their respective communications sections to discuss, be given reading assignments about, and to write about the material presented on Monday. This schedule is flexible, with combined meetings scheduled on other days by consensus of the instructors.

Laboratory

In addition to the regularly scheduled class (workshop) meetings, the students are expected to sign up for communications laboratory, the number of hours based on assesment of placement tests given at the beginning of the semester. The labs are open during most of the school day and one evening each week. At least one instructor is in the laboratory to help the students individually or in small groups. We feel that five minutes of personal attention, giving feedback to the student on his specific writing accomplishments and problems is worth more in effecting improvement than five hours spent in a "regular" class. Past experience with individuals who were motivated to seek help outside of class seems to indicate that this is the case. Such laboratory use as a means of helping students toward "syntactic fluency" was also supported by W. Ross Winterowd's paper on composition at NCTE's Pacific Coast Regional Conference of English in the Two-Year College in Phoenix, Arizona, October, 1976.

Reading

In audition to working on writing problems, each lab has one reading specialist who is trained to do RMI (Reading Miscue Inventory) as developed by Yetta Goodman. Students are also given help with reading texts or writing papers for other courses outside the communications area. We are attempting to use cloze tests to determine student ability to comprehend reading material on various levels of difficulty. Because of our feeling that familiarity with the subject matter and cultural background of the concepts enunciated in the text plays nearly an equal part with syntactic complexity and vocabulary difficulty in determining readability of a given text for a particular student, a cloze test constructed on a passage of the book in question seem to give a much more accurate assessment of its readability than attempts to judge the level of difficulty by words counts and syntactic complexity.

Competence

We feel that one of the most important features of the program is that requirements for each level are stated in terms of student performance or competence. This delineation of requirements is not intended to be a list of behavioral objectives, as we do not espouse behavioral psychology in terms of the methods for modifying student behavior in the direction of the desires outcome (objective).

We offer three courses in the communications area which students might use to fulfill their six-credit requirement in the English track. Students are placed in these courses based on testing conducted during the first week of class, with advanced standing and credit based on demonstrated ability at the exit level of the preceeding course. COM

100 is a basic, one-credit course. To receive credit for this course the student is expected to respond to a reading passage of three to five pages by summarizing or expanding on the ideas presented in a one- to two-page essay. The essay should demonstrate comprehension of the reading, be reasonably well organized, and be nearly free of grammatical or mechanical errors. COM 101 for three credits is the next level. The 101 student demonstrates competence by reading a longer passage of five to ten pages, and writing an expository essay of around four to five pages in which he synthesizes and summarizes the material read. The COM 102 course, three credits, requires reading from multiple sources and writing a short research paper of five or more pages which critically compares the sources.

Mid-Term Promotion

Our primary purpose in promoting on the basis of competence, however, is to allow the students to move at his own optimum speed. If a student achieves the competence level required for the course he is in, we feel that he is wasting his time by remaining in that course until the semester is over. If the teacher feels that a student has reached this level during the term, the student may be moved immediately into the next section, usually after consultation with the teacher, the student, and the chairman, to insure that the assignment presented does actually satisfy the requirements of the course. In addition, exit tests for each section are given at least once or twice during the term in addition to the administration of the placement test at the beginning of each term. All students are encouraged to sit for the exit tests during the term. Movement between sections during the semester is facilitated by offering at least one section of each level (COM 100, 101, 102) at any one class hour. Then the student who is promoted just moves to a different room and section, but his schedule remains the same.

Ideally, we would like to consider each student's enrollment in a particular course as indefinite in term so that he could complete the course in either more or less time than a semester, without penalty. We run into several problems in this area, however. The computer which keeps student records does not understand our program (although the computer programmer does, and cooperates with us). We have to take care that a student who finishes all his communications requirements in mid-semester does not suddenly find that he is not registered for enough credits to be considered a full-time student. Also, the Veterans' Administration does not accept "in progress" type grades as satisfactory progress, although the college does. While we have managed to reach some fairly workable compromises at this small institution, expectations that courses last the traditional one term (no more, no less!) might be more difficult to work with (or around) at larger institutions.

Problems

Since our purpose in writing this article is to recommend our program for export to other institutions, it is only fair to mention some of the problems we have encountered during our first semester. While using material from a content course provides one answer to the question of what students shall write about, there is no guarantee that a single content area so selected will interest every student. We will try to offer some options as to content area next semester, but will probably be limited to only two content courses for the students to choose from. Also, since several instructors (at least three in our present program) will be teaching different levels of communications courses based on that content, the content course must be well prepared in advance to allow the communications instructors to plan their courses. This has been more of a problem in our situation because in most cases satisfactory materials for Navajo history and culture are not available. Some of the best sources are scholars of Navajo oral traditions, including some medicine men over ninety years of age who speak little or no English. The college has produced some written materials in English, but much more is needed. Although we feel that student progress reflects time spent in the laboratory, many students do not spend much time in the lab. We do not wish to penalize

students or require attendance in lab, but perhaps we have not convinced the students of the advantages of individual tutoring. Another potential problem is that since we try to move students during the term, the teachers of the various sections need to keep fairly close contact to be sure we are not drifting off in several different directions. This should not be a problem at a small school such as ours, but physical separation of our classrooms, labs, and offices as well as extra hours spent as lab instructors all interfere with informal meetings where many of these problems could be resolved expeditiously.

Summary

In spite of the above mentioned problems, we feel that the program has several distinct advantages and will have more as we make improvements based on experience. We believe that the combination of content with communication can improve student motivation both by allowing students to work for credits in two areas at once and by providing continuity and a sense of purpose around which to focus communications activities. These benefits should be further enhances as we improve the content courses by gathering more materials and revising syllabi based on consultation with experts in the content areas from other departments. Other improvements can be based on our experience in teaching the courses, e.g. that a certain section may require more or less time to cover than originally planned, or that a certain content area does not raise issues about which students are motivated to write and thus needs to be revised or replaced. We firmly support the right of students at all levels of the educational system to bilingual education and feel that the three communications options, Navajo, English, or Navajo-English, bring the opportunity for bilingual education to the college level. Most important, Navajo-ness and Navajo language fluency are accepted as assets, not liabilities to be given remedial attention. The student is given the option of working toward mastery of standard English, Navajo, or both. These choices should enhance student motivation by requiring the student to decide the direction of his efforts, and thus commit himself to effort in the track he has chosen. The laboratory is a key factor in our program. It must be open during most of the school day so students may use it at their convenience. We are convinced that student progress will be in direct relation to work in the lab. This conviction is based on our experience with a small number of students who have made fantastic accomplishments with a minimum of one-to-one help outside of class. Progress in this context means improvement in writing ability, not completion of a given number of assignments. We have seen students progress through two and even three courses in one semester, achieving the level of competence required for passing each course with no more than a few short critiques of their writing in conferences. Granted, these students were highly motivated, but they had made only average progress before the tutoring sessions. We also intend the laboratory to be a service to the entire college community. We will help students to the best of our abilities with any reading or writing assignments from other courses. Although we are not qualified in science and other technical subjects, sometimes we are able to help students interpret difficult passages in the text or improve the clarity of their writing assignments.

Conclusion

We feel that our program or aspects of it can be used in any school which serves minority students, especially bilingual students. We also feel that except for the bilingual aspects, it would be valuable to any school at which the deteriorating level of freshman writing has been noted--and from what we've seen in the journals over the last few years, where is this not the case? The four points we would urge our colleagues at other institutions to try to report on are: (1) language options for bilingual students, (2) competence base--student progress is based on demonstrated competence, not time or number of assignments completed, (3) combination of content (other than literature or essays) with communications work, and (4) use of the laboratory or some sort of one-to-one critique of student work. We welcome comments, constructive criticism, suggestions, and perhaps even a few visits!

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPELLING

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Too often, English teachers must justify the requirements that they impose on the constituency which at once supports them and utilizes their services. Although the questions might not be phrased quite so blatantly, many students and parents ask, in effect, "Why do you require mechanically accurate, well-written papers from me? I will never do more than fill in an application blank during the rest of my life." The answer of the teacher is usually phrased in words such as these: "The society in which you live requires that you, as an educated person, be able to speak, read and write your language with clarity and accuracy."

To give empirical support to this answer of teachers an attempt was made to see how members of the culture react to at least one form of accuracy in written mechanics, spelling. A semantic differential was used to elicit the attitudes of the students themselves towards differing degrees of spelling proficiency. For this purpose, the techniques used by W. E. Lambert and his colleagues (1965) were adapted to the task at hand; namely, to elicit the attitudes of students towards spelling accuracy without their being conscious of the purpose of the measuring device, the semantic differential. To accomplish this, raters, students in freshman composition classes at Arizona State University, rated a selection from Mencken (1974) under the following conditions: (1) all words spelled correctly, (w) every ninth content word misspelled using misspellings located in Gates (1937), and (3) all content words misspelled using the procedure in (2). (Under conditions (2) and (3) no function words were misspelled.) The same procedure was followed using a humorous letter supposedly written to Dear Abby which was at that time being circulated at the local high school. The Mencken paragraph was selected as being representative of an educated writer; the Abby letter was selected as being representative of an uneducated writer.

The survey forms contained the texts of the two selections and the following scale:

The person writing the above article is:

male :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: female

stupid :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: intelligent

educated :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: uneducated

neat :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: messy

prejudiced:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unprejudiced

cowardly :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: courageous

reliable :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unreliable

successful:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unsuccessful

rich :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: poor

friendly :___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unfriendly

Rater's Name_____Class ENG_____Section_____

Sex_____

All of the scales were preceded by the comment, The person writing the above article is. Following Gilpin (1965), the raters were instructed that the middle position on the differential is the neutral position; the scale is not relevant to the dimension being rated if this position is checked. No student rated the Mencken selection more than once; the same is true of the Abby selection. Means were then taken of the ratings. The results follow.

TABLE I: UNEDUCATED/EDUCATED DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

	Mencken			Abby			
educated	:	2.25	:	3.9	:	:	uneducated

One out of nine words misspelled

	Mencken		Abby			
educated	:	2.53	:	4.64	:	uneducated

All Content words misspelled

	Mencken		Abby		
educated	:	4.15	:	6.4	uneducated

It is apparent from an examination of Table I that the raters correctly pick Mencken as being more educated than the writer of the prank letter to Dear Abby. From that point the expected happens: the worse the spelling becomes, the more uneducated the raters see the writers as being.

A similar trend is noted on the scale stupid/intelligent (Table II).

TABLE II: STUPID/INTELLIGENT DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

	Abby			Mencken			
stupid	:	3.16	:	5.39	:	:	intelligent

One out of nine words misspelled

	Abby			Mencken			
stupid	:	2.76	:	4.69	:	:	intelligent

All content words misspelled

	Abby		Mencken			
stupid:	:	2.32	:	4.19	:	:	intelligent

As the spelling gets worse, the rating shifts towards the stupid end of the scale and away from the end marked intelligent. Raters evidently feel that the person who spells less well is less intelligent.

Whether the trend on the stupid/intelligent scale is related to the trend on the male/female scale or not is open to question, but raters seem to feel that females are as a group better than males at spelling. This becomes apparent from a perusal of Table III.

TABLE III: MALE/FEMALE DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

	Abby			Mencken			
male	1.44			3.85			female

One out of nine words misspelled

	Abby	Mencken					
male	1.4		3.23				female

All content words misspelled

	Abby	Mencken					
male	1.3	2.01					female

The Abby selection on this dimension is not as suitable to measure the shift in the raters' opinions as they view the selections since the Abby letter has content cues that reveal the identity of the writer as a male. But even it shifts slightly more towards the male end of the scale as the spelling gets worse.

Although it might be expected that a similar shift could be found on the dimension successful/unsuccessful, such is not the case. In the minds of the raters, the ability to spell well does not seem to be an indicator of a person's success in life or lack of it. This becomes apparent in the perusal of Table IV.

TABLE IV: SUCCESSFUL/UNSUCCESSFUL DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

	Mencken	Abby				
successful	3.46	5.0				unsuccessful

One out of nine words misspelled

	Mencken	Abby				
successful	3.33	4.82				unsuccessful

All content words misspelled

Mencken Abby

successful :___:___:___:4.27:5.29:___:___: unsuccessful

Here it is apparent that what differences there are between raters of the two selections on the dimension successful/unsuccessful are rather small. The Mencken article does seem to pick up a drift in the direction of unsuccessful as it is spelled with less accuracy.

As might be expected, on the dimension, neat/messy, raters feel that the better spellers are neater than those who spell less well (Table V).

TABLE V: NEAT/MESSY DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

Mencken Abby

neat :___:___:2.91:3.24:___:___:___: messy

One out of nine words misspelled

Mencken Abby

neat :___:___:3.41:4.41:___:___:___: messy

All content words misspelled

Mencken Abby

neat :___:___:___:4.91:5.07:___:___: messy

Other dimensions on the semantic differential did not show as clearly marked trends as the preceding. For instance, the friendly/unfriendly scale is as follows: (Table VI)

TABLE VI: FRIENDLY/UNFRIENDLY DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

Abby Mencken

friendly :___:2.19:___:4.13:___:___:___: unfriendly

One out of nine words misspelled

Abby Mencken

friendly :___:___:2.9 :4.43:___:___:___: unfriendly

All content words misspelled

Abby Mencken

friendly :___:___:2.89:3.7 :___:___:___: unfriendly

Undoubtedly due to the content of the paragraph, Mencken comes off as less friendly than the author of the spurious letter to Dear Abby. For reasons not fully understood, Mencken becomes more friendly as the spelling deteriorates. The dimension rich/poor shows even less of a clearly delineated direction than the friendly/unfriendly dimension.

TABLE VII: RICH/POOR DIMENSION

All words spelled correctly

Mencken Abby

rich :___:___:3.29:___:4.8 :___:___: poor

One out of nine words misspelled

Mencken Abby

rich :___:___:3.12:___:4.69:___:___: poor

All content words misspelled

Mencken Abby

rich :___:___:3.9 :___:___:5.66:___: poor

As might be expected, the prose by Mencken identifies the writer as being a richer person than the author of the Abby letter. But the spelling itself seems to effect the raters' opinions very little with the exception of the last scale which shows that the poor speller is thought of as being financially less well off than the good speller. Other dimensions such as cowardly/courageous or reliable/unreliable show even less difference between well spelled and badly spelled versions. So it is, then, that a semantic differential confirms what might be labeled standard expectations towards poor spellers as being less educated, less neat, less intelligent and more masculine than the good spellers.

If some speculation is allowed, it would appear that the attitudes of the freshmen reflect the attitudes of members of the society in which they live. People as a whole think of girls as better spellers than boys. They also think of most secretaries (who are women) as better spellers than their bosses (who are men). It may be that the masculine/feminine dimension signals more than this. Research in New York (Labov, 1968) has indicated that the

young males who are accepted in the street gangs read at a grade level at least two years below that of their academically successful peers. Here, as in many segments of the school age population, the successful male is sissy, an egg-head or a bone-head. To be socially successful with his peers, the male must be an academic failure. Since success at spelling is one dimension of masculinity, the socially successful school-age male is a failure academically.

Knowledge of this sort is of course useful to teachers who are involved in debate with the very people that they must teach. Whether freshman students are willing to admit it or not, a knowledge of spelling is important to them as it probably is to the society as a whole. Furthermore, being forewarned is being fore-armed. Those teachers who are aware of these dimensions can equip themselves for the tasks that they face. It would appear that they have one or two differing strategies available to them (among many others): (1) they can recognize that males have pressure on them to be academically non-successful in certain areas and thus let them exhibit their masculinity in this area by failing to perform adequately, or (2) they can attempt to allay the fears of their students, especially the males, that success is a sign of non-masculinity.

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MANUSCRIPTS WANTED

The Classroon Practices Committee is seeking articles for Teaching Basics - Really! the 1977 issue of the NCTE publications, Classroon Practices in the Teaching of English. Manuscripts must specify a particular basic language arts skill and describe a strategy for teaching this skill in elementary, college, or secondary school classrooms. Skills can be taken from the entire range of language arts and can be as divergent as achieving consenus as a group leader, proofreading an essay, or reading critically. Two copies of each manuscript, typewritten, doublespaced, and no longer than 2000 words, should be sent to the editor, Ouida H. Clapp, Buffalo Public Schools, Room 728, City Hall, Buffalo, New York 14202, by April 15, 1977.

WHITHER ENGLISH?

Frank Schnorbus, Bordentown, New Jersey

Someday, some expert in linguistics will pronounce the date after which in America--sometime after 1900--the English language became the American Language. Today's English teachers know only too well that traditional English literary selections turn off both the students and, in some cases, the teachers themselves. This attitude is as much a result of changes in the English language as spoken in America as it is of changes in literary tastes. These changes are not identifiable orthographic or syntactical landmarks as previous shifts in English usage have been; rather they seem to indicate a tendency toward the use of simplistic vocabulary and an elemental literature. These changes in expression have been generated by cultural forces which have affected the American life style.

Classical tradition and British culture have been major influences on the English language in America. Through the classical tradition students were in touch with the source of much of English vocabulary and the antecedents of sophisticated language expression and through British culture students found experience which paralleled experiences in American life. The classical tradition, which influenced English in secondary education, has suddenly stopped being an aid to students whose vocabulary range is shrinking. High School students are no longer required to study Latin in order to graduate or to get into college. In fact, compulsory education statutes have put into the secondary schools students who have enough difficulty with the basic elements of the English language (at this point I am not referring to non-English speaking students) without their having to learn about the gerundive, the periphrastic onjugation, or the sophisticated vocabulary necessary to read Cicero. Students and educators are more interested in situations and studies which they believe will shed more light on understanding contemporary conditions. If they are interested in the past, they are more interested in the human tradition studied by anthropologists than they are in the classical antecedents of Western civilization.

Today, authors rarely use a Latin quotation in general works. Those authors who are intrepid enough to use such a quotation judiciously translate it in a footnote. Of the Latin expressions which have been taken into the language, et cetera is the only Latin expression that is in common usage. Even that expression suffers at the hands of young students who usually abbrevitate it as etc. Latin and Greek are still rich sources for terminology which identify new ideas and procedures in science, technology, and the arts, however.

In addition to the diminution of the classical influence on American language and English in general, British culture as embodied in Shakespeare, Dickens, and Hardy, as well as in Mother Goose stories and other folk tales, now is only one of many foreign influences on American culture. Certainly during the early part of the twentieth century Russian and French literature had a greater influence on American belles lettres, and the central European psychological movement has had more significant impact on American social thought and philosophy than the homely and homely characters in English fiction.

Presently, the greater identification of ethnic groups with their own cultural traditions has caused British culture to be neglected rather than rejected; consequently, common expressions and allusions which are related to British or indeed

to European folkways are unrecognizable to younger Americans.

At the same time, there is a decline of interest in religion and in the use of traditional approaches in the teaching of religion. This phenomenon is important linguistically because the accepted translations of the Bible had stabilized the language for three centuries. The Bible, therefore, is not as much a part of the experience of students as it was for their parents, who followed its drama or heard its stately language in Sunday schools or in weekly church services. Every English teacher must know the frustration of having to explain the simplest biblical allusions to children who do not go to religious instruction or who, if they do, participate in rap sessions which do not rely on biblical background information. There must also be a corresponding frustration on the part of students who have read literature selections which are based on biblical allusions.

The media have developed mass audiences whose educational level and whose interests are quite different from those of readers of novels and essays. To reach these mass audiences, the users of the media employ language which is direct and uncomplicated--in a sense, language which is a common denominator. Through television, radio, and films, viewers hear language which is calculated to be understood by as many people as possible.

Madison Avenue admen, campaigning politicians, and television writers know that success in the use of the media means simplicity in language. Radio and television commercials, for example, simply repeat the names of products and do not describe their technical superiority. Is the "Binaca blast" intrinsically different from Listerine which has the taste you hate? One can not judge which is the better from the facts presented, but one can remember the cute presentation. In his presidential campaign, John Kennedy attracted attention to himself by discussing the "missile gap." The concept was simple and the thought of its existence (it did not in fact exist) outraged chauvinistic voters. In the recent Presidential election, President-elect Carter tried to build his image as that of a man of the people while President Ford kept repeating that he knew that he was going to win. Voters apparently did not miss a discussion of issues.

Anyone who watches television soap operas will observe that never is one jolted by an unfamiliar word unless it is a terminal-sounding/medical expression which is introduced so melodramatically that even someone who does not speak English will know by the dire sound of the background cellos or the actors' double takes that the strange sounding word applies to an ugly reality. These people--copywriters, campaigners, and authors of scenarios--probably understand that the medium is the message, but they also understand that the mass audience will not get the message unless the message is in monsyllabic English.

While English is developing in the direction which Winston Churchill anticipated when he suggested that Basic English become the global lingua franca, there are two other tendencies in our language which deserve mention.

Vocabulary expansion is parallel to the increases in scientific and technological knowledge. So involved is some of the terminology they use that scientific treatises and repair manuals require the close reading that scholars reserve for philosophic texts or trignometry problems. If the increase in the number of published books is indicative of the increase in scientific and technical terminology, the ordinary American reader is becoming further alienated from sophisticated language.

On the other hand, despite the uniformity of pronunciation and the simplistic vocabulary used by the mass media, new dialectical patterns are emerging and are being passed on by families that spend hours in front of the television and by students who spend their early years studying English. Who can forget President Kennedy's reference to "Cuber" (Cuba) on national television? Why do some people in New York City say "motha" and "fatha" and other people a few miles away in Hoboken say "earl" when they are referring to oil?

It is difficult to pin these patterns down because dialects are fragile. Literature which was written by Lowell in a New England dialect of a hundred years ago requires footnotes. The street argot of today is so far removed from the pollyanna twenty-three skidoo slang of the early twentieth century that the English teacher is hard put to define twerp or other equally exotic terms for the what's-happ'nin'-man generation. Dialectal speech patterns ebb and flow with the social changes and so far have not caused the language to shift significantly.

What is going to be the resolution of these tendencies? Perhaps the history of Latin provides the model for the development of a language which, like English, is used in far-ranging geographical areas. In some cases, the development of English parallels the development of Latin. After the breakdown of the Roman political hegemony, Latin continued for almost a thousand years as the effective intellectual and legal language of much of Europe while dialectical Latin evolved into the Romance languages. The British political hegemony has been dissolved. It is not unreasonable to assume that new languages will develop in English-speaking countries while a type of English will become the classical language which will be taught in secondary schools five hundred years from now. Ave atque vale.

BACK TO THE BASICS: GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Charles Suhor (for SLATE)

The Issues

The widespread public concern for a return to the "basics" in English has included a call for increased study in grammar and usage. Critics point to the frequent use of bad grammar by contemporary students, and even by community leaders and public officials. The presumed decline in language standards is often attributed to poor language models provided by television, radio, popular music, and other sources that reinforce examples of poor speaking habits. Advocates of "back to the basics" believe that English teachers have abandoned instruction in fundamentals of grammar like parts of speech, sentence diagraming and subject-verb agreement. Critics also complain that teachers permit students to use poor grammar in the classroom. Students are allowed to "do their own thing," they say, and the result is the sloppy and ineffective speech rampant in today's society.

Professional Viewpoints: NCTE/Research

It is true that many English teachers no longer see grammar instruction as a series of rules distinguishing "right" forms of speech from "wrong" forms. A distinction should be made between grammar and usage. The former refers to a study of the principles underlying language, the latter to the kind of language called for in particular social situations. Since all normal children adequately learn the

basic grammar of their native dialects (for example, the native speaker never makes a mistake like saying "am going I not" for "I am not going"), the public clamor actually focuses on dialect-related usage differences, (as in the use of "I ain't goin" for "I am not going"), which are not grammar problems at all.

Usage differences were once popularly believed to reflect differences in intellectual ability. However, linguistic research has demonstrated that all dialects of English are complete, valid language systems. Moreover, people can do abstract thinking and can talk intelligently in any dialect. There are no "smart dialects" or "ignorant dialects."

The NCTE Commission on Composition has recognized the importance of "the study of the structure...of language, including English grammar," as a "valuable asset to a liberal education." But, warns the commission, grammar should be taught "for its own sake, not as a substitute for composition," and it should not be an instrument for presenting the grammar of a particular dialect "as 'right' or 'pure' or 'logical' or better than others."

Society's demand for use of standard English in certain formal situations (especially in certain jobs) can be viewed in several ways. From a strictly objective viewpoint, such demands are arbitrary, because dialect differences in America are seldom so great as to hinder communication among speakers of different dialects. The insistence on standard English speech as a job qualification is therefore seen by many as a way of reinforcing class differences, of making sure that the dominant culture is not invaded by talented people of minority cultures. NCTE's Conference and College Composition and Communication forthrightly affirmed "the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language--the dialect of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style."

From a practical standpoint, the English teacher knows that nonstandard dialects are one kind of barrier to social mobility, so the teaching of English as a second dialect--without denigrating the students' native dialect--is a way of providing students with skills for coping with and surviving in our society. At the same time, it is reasonable to ask the business community and society at large to tolerate a wider range of dialects and language styles, as long as the basic end of communication is being served.

Many English teachers, then, feel a responsibility to reject approaches to grammar and usage study that support the linguistic imperialism of prescriptive "school grammars." They also feel responsible for selecting approaches to language study that (a) actually increase the effectiveness of the students' language performance and (b) describe language structure in an accurate way. The traditional grammar study recommended by "back to basics" advocates meets neither of these qualifications. Research indicates that students' language performance is affected not by formal grammar study but by direct, nonanalytical techniques like the audio-lingual method and sentence-combining. And the most accurate descriptions of grammatical structure--if, indeed, abstract knowledge of grammar is to be emphasized--are found in generative grammar and generative semantics.

Increasingly, English teachers are moving away from teaching labels and definitions and towards the things that make a difference in their students' lives: promoting fluency and richness of expression; reducing instances of cliches and jargon; creating an awareness of manipulative language in advertising and politics; and promoting logical exchange of ideas in open discussion.

The impact of the new approaches to language instruction has not yet been felt. At this point, teachers are looking forward to the basics, and many years are likely to pass before the ill effects of entrenched, unproductive approaches are modified by the "new fundamentals" of language instruction. In the meantime, the general public must be given a clear picture of the real nature of language in our society and the classroom practices best suited to solving those problems.

ACTION-LEARNING: A WAY OF PLANNING

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Action-Learning is a term which school people have variously interpreted. A given definition might be as short as "practical learning"; another might be as long as "the opportunity for students to participate in society [under sanction of the regular school program] as paid or volunteer workers."[1] These are administrative interpretations of the term which are useful to teachers only because they stimulate brainstorming about curriculum planning and teaching strategies. Getting students out of schools for community-based activities is obviously desirable, but the spirit of Action-Learning is vital to in-school activities, as well. How can the English teacher employ concepts of Action-Learning in the classroom itself? In order to answer, we must re-define the term for use rather than for mere description. An activity or project may be called "Action-Learning" (1) if it provides an orderly, step-by-step process which students must work though to reach a goal; (2) if it results in a product; and (3) if it requires cooperative effort. I suggest that any learning task which meets these conditions will invigorate the English (or any other) program.

While I am defining, I shall presume to distinguish between an activity and a project: the first is a short learning exercise, and the second is a long one. One demonstration which I have used in workshops will serve to illustrate an Action-Learning activity. Provided the group is relatively small (no more than 50), I divide the students (or teachers) into five sub-groups. I have 26 3X5 index cards, with each card containing one word. To the first group, I give six cards, arranging them to contain the following meaningless assortment of words: not, the, world, prison-house, a, is. The second group also gets six cards: of, but, kindergarten, kind, a, spiritual. The third goup gets five: infants, where, of, millions, bewildered. The fourth group also receives five: spell, are, God, to, trying. The final group receives four: blocks, with, wrong, the. At this point I ask the groups to place their words into a "meaningful syntactical relationship." When all groups feel satisfied with their ordering, I ask them to link with each other, keeping up the process until the linked groups make an English sentence. Eventually, the groups produce the following statement (by E.A. Robinson): "The world is not a prison-house but a kind of spiritual kindergraten where millions of bewidlered infants are trying to spell God with the wrong blocks."

Next, we discuss punctuation and usually decide (for stated reasons) that comma should be inserted between kindergarten and where. We then discuss metaphorical language in the statement, usually identifying prison-house, kindergarten, infants,(sometimes God) and blocks. By analyzing the metaphors, we can re-state Robinson's proposition in more literal language.

According to our definition, the first condition of Action-Learning (orderly, step-by-step process), is met in this activity because (1) the total group was divided into five sub-groups; (2) cards were distributed to each group; (3) each group was directed to arrange the cards according to English syntax; (4) the groups were asked to link with each other in order to derive the statement by E.A. Robinson; (5) the whole group discussed punctuation for the statement; (6) the whole group analyzed and discussed metaphorical language in the statement. The second condition (a resulting product) is met because (1) the groups took parts of a word puzzle and ordered them to make English; and (2) the groups linked to one another to form the configuation of a complete statement. And the third condition (group process) is met because the five sub-groups first worked apart and them cooperatively to make a sentence.

It is significant to point out, also, that this example of an Action-Learning activity integrates instruction in language (exercise in syntax), literature (discussion of metaphors), and composition (speaking, composing in both oral and written forms, and determining punctuation). The group members are compelled to practice such basic skills as (1) discovering sound-symbol patterns, (2) discovering language as a system of meaning-making, (3) discovering sentence sense, and (4) developing an understanding of metaphorical language. Granted, I have provided there a quite simple illustration of an Action-Learning activity, and perhaps I have overkilled it with analysis; but an infinite number of additional--and--better --activities can be planned by teachers who view Action-Learning as I have described it. To see Action-Learning as a planning process is to bring order into the instructional program. Words such as order and structure have become almost pejorative in professional literature of the past decade; but, in describing a planing process, such words seem crucial.

Time and space will not permit me here to provide a detailed model of an Action-Learning project but a list of names for such projects might prove useful to some:

TV Production
Radio Production
Film Production
Magazine Production
    1) Local Lore (Foxfire)
    2) Literary
Book Production
Class Newspaper
Scrapbook Production
Recipe Book Production
Class Play Production
Class Play Writing
Still Photograph Stories
Collage Production
Debate
Game-Making
Puppetry
Simulation
Role Playing
Pantomime
Reader's Theater
Improvisation
Story Dramatization

A simple topical format for students and teachers to use in planning Action-Learning activities and projects appears as follows:

I. Rationale
II. Objectives
III. Action Learning (Activity/Project)
    A. Narrative Description
    B. Nature of Product
IV. The Process (Step-by-Step Procedures)
    A. For the Teacher
    B. For the Student
V. Method of Evaluating Students' Work

A similar format usually exists in the experienced teacher's head, but, for students who will work with it, writing it down is necessary.

H.G. Hullfish and Phillip G. Smith[3] sumarize the essential meaning of psychology for teachers by cutting through a multitude of existing learning theories. Essentially, they suggest five firm principles by which learning is facilitated. Learning tends to be most permanent when

(1) the learner is motivated by a stake he or she has in the activity;

(In an Action-Learning activity or project students have options as to how much individual involvement each will have in carrying through the steps toward creating a product. Also, the students will help determine what sort of activity or project they will do. The goal of creating a product serves to provide sufficient motivation for most students.)

(2) the learning is geared to the learner's physical and intellectual ability;

(Action-Learning activities and projects are tailor-made to meet this condition, since they contain tasks which require varying levels of physical and intellectual competencies. Individuals will usually discover their working levels within their respective groups.)

(3) the learning is patterned and the learner can see relationships between an activity and a goal;

(Since Action-Learning students are required to work through a series of orderly steps to reach a clearly defined goal (the product), they are able to see relationships between the steps and the goal.)

(4) the learning is evaluated so the learner can assess his or her progress;

(Action-Learning emphasizes a clear process of working toward creating a product; therefore, students sometimes must repeat steps until they complete them successfully. Because of the interrelatedness of steps in the process, students must follow them rather strictly in order to reach the goal. If evaluation is to mean anything, students must be able to recognize clearly the difference between success and failure. Action-Learning permits such recognition.)

(5) the learning is integrated with personal-social development.

(Action-Learning, which demands group cooperation, is never geared for individuals alone; however, interaction among students--with all of the adjunct tensions involved--provides ample experiences and lessons for personal-social growth.)

Action-Learning, as I have used the term here, requires students in school to work through processes that foster development of all the broad communication skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening, observing, and critical and creative thinking. Students do not simply receive information as an end to learning; they use it for the purpose of creating a product. Action-Learning places students in roles as workers who see meaning (that is, "relevance") in their work. It helps create cooperative learning environments in which each student makes contributions to the success of everyone else in the group.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See 25 Action Learning Schools (Reston, Va.: The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1974), p. 1.

[2]For such a model, see Eliot Wigginton's Moments (Washington, D.C.: Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Service, Inc., 1975). This document contains a detailed account of the author's work with the Foxfire project in Rabun Gap, Georgia.

[3]See "A Theory of Learning for Teaching," in Crucial Issues in Education, ed. Henry Ehlers and Gordon C. Lee (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 335.

TEACHING EXPOSITION WITH SECTOR ANALYSIS

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For the newcomer to the expository form of writing, and many freshmen in these open-door-policy days fit the description, the linguistic method called Sector Analysis provides a fresh and functional approach which both students and instructors enjoy. The pleasure comes with the acquisition of mature writing skills as sentences are analyzed, manipulated, and reconstructed into more effective patterns.

Sector Analysis, created by Robert L. Allen of Teachers College, Columbia University, is a different method from other grammars of English because it addresses the problems of written English rather tnan spoken English. In his book, English Grammars and English Grammar (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1972), Professor Allen explains that sector analysis is a grammar of written English in the sense that it defines sentences and other constructions in terms of signals that one sees on the printed page rather than in terms of the sound that one hears.

I chose this grammar system because it is particularly applicable to the classroom comprised of diverse student backgrounds and abilities--second language or black dialect interference, remedial or the gamut of freshman deficiencies--where the goal is written, edited, standard English. By "edited English" I mean relatively formal exposition that is used in college and must be differentiated from spoken English because students sometimes tend to write the way they speak, and the way they speak is not acceptable in essays and term reports. Moreover, most students have never been taught to edit in the real sense of editing, making one's writing cogent.

Contrary to other grammars, sector analysis acknowledges only one type of English sentence in the English language. However, this single type of sentence has many layers and, each layer has many sectors which in turn are comprised of many different constructions. In the average sentence, many sectors are left unfilled. Even in the longer, more complex sentence, some sectors often are left unfilled. The complete system of sector analysis forms a grammatical hierarchy of constructions within other constructions. When a student becomes aware of the spectrum of positions on each layer of a sentence, he is more likely to recognize and to remedy the errors of inexperienced writers--run-ons, comma splices, lack of agreement and reference, fragments, improper modification, and incorrect verb sequences. When all the positions or sectors are understood, a student substitutes similar constructions into a given sector within the sentence. For example:

Subj.	Modifiers	Predicate
The boy/	in the blue jeans/	was the one that I hired.

is the same construction as:

The book/on the table/is the one that I enjoyed.

If we write

That book/is the one that I enjoyed.

we have omitted a sector possibility; that is, we know at least one sector that has been left unfilled. In this manner, students learn a variety of possibilities, and teachers show how to rectify a variety of common errors quite simply.

To begin, students memorize 21 X words. With the use of these 21 X words, they can find the subject and predicates position of sentences.

The 21 X words are:

am			may	can	
is	do	have	might	could	shall
was	does	had			should
were	did	has	must	will	
are			ought	would	

Although there is an X word in every sentence, it is often hidden. To find the subject, the sentence is turned into a question.

James will go to college next year.

Will James go to college next year?

The X word "will" shifts its position from statement to question. The subject of a sentence is always found between the X-word position in the statement and the X-word position in the question. Therefore, the subject is "James" and everything left over is the predicate. Take the following sentence: The basic prescription for freshmen should be reexamined. After turning this statement into a question and finding the words that fit into the sector between the X word of the sentence and the X word of the question, the subject turns out to be "The basic prescription for freshmen." And, incidentally, students are learning how to determine whether a fragment has been written. If a sentence can not be turned into a yes or no question without adding any words (except hidden X words), it is a fragment. When the X word is hidden, it can be extracted from a time-oriented verb form. For example:

(and does enjoy)
Paula enjoys the courses in her major field.

Does Paula enjoy the courses in her major field?

To make this sentence into a question, it was necessary to insert the word "does." There are only three hidden X words; "do," "does," or "did."

does + enjoy = enjoys (we say that "does" is hidden in the "S" form of the verb) pres. sing.

do + enjoy = enjoy (note that the meanings are the same) pres. pl.

did + enjoy = enjoyed (the "D" form or past tense of the verb form takes "did")

Since it is the X word that carries the time orientation of the sentence, words such as "running," or "pushed" do not show time orientation until an X word is added. For example:

Larry was running. Larry is running. Larry will be running.

Noah has been pushed Noah is being pushed. Noah will have been pushed.

Adding an X word is one of the ways a student learns to correct a fragment on his paper. Often, in a student's writing, it is a subject that is needed, as well as

the time-oriented verb. The fragment

enjoying courses in her major field

may be edited to read

Anna was enjoying courses in her major field.

and, of course, there are other verb forms that will do. Thus far, two requisites of a sentence have been mentioned. However, there are three more, in addition to the subject and time-oriented verb. Every sentence must have beginning and end punctuation and, fourth, sentences must be in normal word order. In English as in most languages, there are prescribed sector positions for words and word groups. These positions are internalized at a very early age and native speakers of English are able to intuitively unscramble the words in the parentheses that follow and make a coherent English sentence without knowing any of the rules.

(little, three, baskets, unusual,
square, the, purple, Mexican, straw) were sold to Sarah.

Allowing for occasional flexibility in the descriptive order, the sentence would be ordered to read:

The three, unusual, little, square, purple, Mexican, straw baskets were sold to Sarah.

The determiner comes first, then number, opinion, size, shape, color, origin, material, nucleus or "head word." Speakers of other than English have to memorize this order as they learn the language.

The fifth and final requisite of a sentence is a non-included clause. A non-included clause is simply a clause that does not begin with an includer. Some of the more common includers are "because," "when," "while," "since," "although," "if," "before," and "after." (A list of includers is given to students.) These words often herald fragments, and a student learns to correct these types of fragments either by deleting the includer or by adding a non-included clause. For example, the fragment

Because Elizabeth always turned in her work on time,

is edited to become either

Elizabeth always turned in her work on time.

or

Because Elizabeth always turned in her work on time, she was well liked by her teachers.

A punctuation rule is learned, too. Included clauses that come at the beginning of a sentence need a comma. They do <u>not</u> need a comma when they come at the end of a sentence:

Elizabeth was well liked by her teachers because she always turned her work in on time.

In addition, relationship and subordination of ideas can be taught with included clauses. As an example, in the following sentences, the emphasis and meaning become quite different.

She loved him because she nursed him back to health.
She had nursed him back to health because she loved him.

Students also learn to eliminate comma splices and run-ons when they recognize that "trunks" (sentences without beginning and end punctuation) are non-included clauses.

Agreement and reference are taught through "time ties," the term used in sector analysis. Subjects must tie with the X word in the predicate; predicates must tie with time expressions (for example, "last night," "tomorrow," "at the present time"); determiners must tie with their referents.

Students write a variety of rhetorically effective sentences as a result of working with large constructions and grasping their syntactic relationship. Some of the following techniques are taught for this purpose. "Shifters" are units that fill sectors of a sentence that may be shifted from the beginning to the end of sentences without changing the meaning. Shifters are frequently includers, and the same comma rule applies.

F
While Leonard travelled a great deal,) his partners took care of the home office.

Or E
His partners took care of the home office (while Leonard travelled a great deal.

More often, shifters are single words or very short phrases such as "yesterday" or "in the future." Whenever two sentences are combined by making one of them into a shifter, the other part of the sentence must be a non-included clause. For example:

Patricia frequently is tired after school.
She finds that baking bread is relaxing.

combine to make one sentence:

Although Patricia frequently is tired after school,
she finds that baking bread is relaxing.

Another technique, one-and-a-half sentences, is a more formal method of combining. Only those sentences that have identical subjects can be cut in half and combined. For example:

half-sentence
Joshua was/covered with snow from his tumble.
He (Joshua) trudged up the hill for one more sleigh ride.

combine to make a one-and-a-half sentence.

Covered with snow from his tumble, Joshua trudged up
the hill for one more sleigh ride.

It should be pointed out that because the subject is eliminated when the cut takes place, it is necessary to replace the pronoun "he" with the subject "Joshua."

Predicatids and clausids, most commonly found after the prepositions "with," "by," and "for" provide additional methods of combining. They are similar to half sentences,

show no time orientation, and can be used in several ways--after includers or prepositions, at the front, end or post-subject positions.

Predicatid: After talking to Ellin, Dan decided to visit her.
Clausid: After Dan talked to Ellin, he decided to visit her.

The following sentence has a front shifter sector filled, a trunk subject, clausid, post-subject position W filled by a predicatid, two trunk predicates, and an end shifter. It could, of course, have other sectors filled as well.

F ts CLAUSID (∧)
Dressed in a new jumper,) Freda, with her tote bag hanging from her shoulder,
predicatid (W) tp tp
E aware that it was very cold outside, refused to wear a coat, and left the house. (laughing at everyone.

It also has the "joiner" (+) position filled. (Joiners are and or ,but or ; and they are used to join sentences.) However, it does not have the "insert" position filled. Inserts are units that are placed into sentences as something extra. They do not really form part of the basic structure of the sentence. They are often inserted between the front shifter and the subject positions, but they can be inserted at almost any boundary line between two sectors. One-word inserts such as "sometimes," "often," "consequently," "however," are even inserted in the middle of a sector. A writer will frequently add an insert to express his own opinion or to make a comment about what he is writing. One important type of insert is the "appositive," which can be inserted after almost any nominal and gives additional information about the nominal, information that is commonly set off by means of punctuation marks--commas, parentheses, dashes.

For example:

A
Naomi, the little girl in the family, tried to attract everyone's attention,
but it was David, the newborn, who succeeded.
A

There are the two common types of inserts--the appositive (A) and the non-restrictive clause (∧). When inserts rove around in a sentence from one boundary line to another, they are referred to as "rovers." The most important class of rovers are those that link sentences. ("Linkers" are words such as "nevertheless," or "therefore.")

A final technique for combining sentences is the cleft sentence. An embedded unit of the sentence is removed and placed in front of the sentence after the words "it was" or "it is." The sentences itself now follows the shifted unit introduced by "that," "who," or "whose." For example:

Dr. S_____learned about the treatment of tuberculosis at the Brompton Hospital in London.

It was Dr. S_____who learned about the treatment of tuberculosis at the Brompton Hospital in London.

It was at the Brompton Hospital that Dr. S_____learned about the treatment of tuberculosis.

As editing and combining skills mount, the writing experience becomes more and more gratifying. From simplistic writing structures, the students move to more mature sentence structure, adding large word constructions within sector possibilities and deleting others from the prohibitive sectors. They become editors in the most meaningful sense of the word. Their full-blown sentences lend more concreteness and specificity to their writing.

I believe that sector analysis has implications for the creative writer and for the reader who has difficulty comprehending college texts. Unpeeling the layers of sentence constructions helps students not only to write concise and clear papers but, in addition, so students tell me, they learn to recognize the main ideas and supporting points in an intricate maze of college textbook rhetoric.

It has been necessary to describe sector analysis in a superficial manner in order to serve the exigencies of an introductory article on the subject. However, to oversimplify this grammar system is really unjust. It is an extremely comprehensive and extraordinarily valid linguistic system that deserves a careful study. Its use in writing courses, however, can be effective with a serious reading of English Grammars and English Grammar written for those interested in history of grammar systems and an introduction to sector analysis and, with the textbook written for students entitled Working Sentences, by Robert L. Allen, Rita L. Pompian, and Doris A. Allen (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1975). It is with the hope of whetting your appetite to do just this that I thought I would tell you about sector analysis.

BACK TO THE BASICS: LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

Elizabeth McPherson (for SLATE)

The Issues

People complain that the schools aren't teaching students to "talk correctly," and people are confused about what "correct talk" is.

Does "talking correctly" mean making geographical variations conform to local practice? Does it mean getting rid of such symbolic colloquialisms as "he don't" or "ain't got no" in every speech situation? Does it mean distinguishing between "lie" and "lay," or "lend" and "loan," and learning not to say "It was between John and myself?" Or, does "correctness" vary with the audience and the situation?

What people mean by "correctness" will depend on where they grew up, how much education they have had, what ambitions they hold for their children, and/or what social barriers they want to enforce.

Professional Viewpoints: NCTE/Research

In November 1974, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution emphasizing that students have a right to speak and learn in their own language, in the dialect that makes them comfortable and gives them a sense of their own identity and worth. That resolution was passed because NCTE members know something about the nature of language and how people learn it; they have some information not shared by the general public.

As language scholars, we know that language changes, slowly but inevitably, and that what was a solecism a century ago--splitting an infinitive, for instance--

is now common practice among our best writers and speakers.

We know that everybody speaks a dialect--there's nothing pejorative about the term. Dialects can be regional or socioeconomic, and include pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. All children master the basic elements of their own dialect before they start school.

We know that people learn the language they hear spoken. Young children have an enormous capacity to absorb language, an ability that begins to diminish with adolescence and has diminished so much by adulthood that changing ingrained patterns is a slow and often painful process.

We know that speakers of any dialect can add new words whenever they need them, usually without shifting the major features of their dialects.

We know that children who read a lot, both in and out of school, probably gain more syntactic flexibility and broader vocabularies than children who roam the playgrounds or sit glued to television.

We know that there's no such thing as an absolute standard of correctness. What's right for one situation may be quite "wrong," or unsuitable, in a different situation. Language choices cannot be measured as "right" or "wrong" in the way that yardsticks can be checked to see whether their inches are the proper length.

We know that all speakers adjust their language choices to the situation they find themselves in. Students don't talk on the playground the way they talk in the classroom, or speak to their friends as they speak to their teachers. This ability to shift styles shows a genuine skill in using language--the same skill that adults use in adapting to the requirements of the job, the cocktail bar, or a funeral service.

We know that people, young and old, do make changes in their language habits, but they make those changes only when they get an immediate benefit. High grades or success in school is often not enough to provide the motivation they need.

We know that people think in language, and that people can think logically or illogically in any dialect. We know that the ability to think clearly is more important than minor dialect variations, and most of us suspect that time spent on clarity of thought is better spent than time devoted to shifting dialect patterns.

But we also know that people judge others by the language choices they make. Such judgments are harmless enough when they are limited to "Are you from Australia?" or "You sound like a Chicagoan," but they can be damaging when they result in judgments such as "poor white trash," "uneducated (and probably stupid)," or "socially unacceptable." We tell students they will be judged by their language habits, just as they are judged by their dress and their table manners.

Strategies for Action

We can help the public understand what we're trying to do if we:

1) emphasize that practice in using language by sharing experiences, role-playing, and other devices, is a better route to flexibility and effectiveness than having a teacher correct mistakes. In other words, discussions

of appropriateness, clarity, and intelligibility are more useful than "chasing errors."

2) explain that drills in usage are more likely to teach nervousness and self-consciousness than change in language. Such drills can teach people to fill in the blanks or name the parts, but seldom teach them to speak or write better.

3) remind parents that schools can supply only a small part of the language learning that goes on. Children spend only seven hours a day in school for five days a week; the rest of their waking hours they are bombarded with language that seems more real to them than the language they hear in the classroom.